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# **THE SURVIVAL OF THE OBJECT**

**Does Winnicott's work constitute a paradigm shift in psychoanalysis?**

**Jan Abram**

**Context statement**

**for**

**PhD by published works – Psychoanalysis**

**Awarded by**

**Middlesex University**

**May 2004**



## ABSTRACT

This context statement provides a critical overview of my work on D.W.Winnicott, as seen in the submitted works, and demonstrates that my critical orientation develops the field, and thus justifies my claim for the award of PhD by published works. To provide a background to my work, I begin with an outline of the context in which my work on Winnicott emerged. This is followed by a brief presentation of the publications of D.W.Winnicott to illustrate the nature of my task in organising his work. I introduce a summary of the submitted works and show how they relate to each other.

I begin the second section with a concise account of the evolution of psychoanalysis that results in a Freudian paradigm, in order to illustrate the context out of which Winnicott's work evolved. This is followed by a resumé of the principal theories in Winnicott's work to show that my comprehensive organisation of the themes and concepts provides a demonstration that Winnicott's theoretical matrix extends psychoanalytic thought and proves him to be one of the most significant innovators in psychoanalysis since Freud. This section is an exemplification that my work on Winnicott, as seen in the main volume of the submitted works - *The Language of Winnicott* – and elaborated by the other submitted works - constitutes an original contribution to knowledge.

I further my claim for a PhD by published works by showing that in addition to my organisation of Winnicott's work I make a step towards extending Winnicott's theory through my introduction of the notion of a 'surviving object'. In *The Language of Winnicott* I lay stress on two fundamental concepts at the heart of Winnicott's theoretical matrix - 'the use of an object' and 'violation of the self'. In my clinical paper, *Squiggles, clowns and Catherine Wheels*, I discuss further these core concepts and show how they allude to the beginning of a new concept - 'the surviving object'. Here I elaborate this concept with reference to my clinical work. This section offers further evidence that my original contribution to knowledge, as seen in the submitted works and underpinned by this statement, advances the field for future research in Winnicott's theories.

In the third section I explore my development as a researcher and describe my methodology in writing the submitted works. I discuss my style of learning and the value of my trainings in psychoanalytic psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, and comment on the distinction between the psychoanalytic paradigm I carry with me in my clinical practice and the research paradigm I make use of in my research. This is followed by a reflection on the limitations of my research and I conclude this context statement with an outline of the consequences of my work. Thus the submitted works, in conjunction with this statement, affirm that my work on Winnicott provides a way of thinking through the question concerning a Winnicottian paradigm shift in psychoanalysis.

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## **1 BACKGROUND TO, CRITICAL REVIEW AND SUMMARY OF THE SUBMITTED WORKS**

In this section I provide a background to the development of my work on Winnicott that resulted in the publication of the submitted works.

### **1a Context of study and emergent ideas**

In 1988 I joined a course run by The Squiggle Foundation<sup>1</sup> aimed at exploring the original themes in Winnicott's work. From 1989 onwards I joined the teaching team of the Foundation and for the next few years was responsible for giving several lectures a year on Winnicott's themes, as well as offering workshops, conferences and creating new courses.<sup>2</sup> In those early years of studying Winnicott's work I became conscious of two contradictory facts. Firstly, *it was clear that Winnicott's contribution to the development of psychoanalytic theory was substantial*. In the initial part of my research I had not realised the full extent of his originality, but, fresh from my four year training as a psychotherapist (where only one paper of Winnicott's was on the curriculum) I was impressed by Winnicott's distinctive rendering of psychoanalysis. Secondly, I was puzzled as to why Squiggle had come into being - why was it necessary to have an organisation that was set up exclusively to focus on Winnicott's work? It gradually became clear that although Winnicott's reputation was well known and respected in the field of psychoanalysis as one of the leading figures of the Independent Group of The British Psycho-Analytical Society, *it was apparent that his work was at best underestimated, and at worst, seriously marginalised, and/or misunderstood*.<sup>3</sup> Why was this the case?

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<sup>1</sup>The Squiggle Foundation was set up in consultation with Clare Winnicott, and became a registered charity in 1981. The Foundation's aims are to study, disseminate and cultivate the work and tradition of D.W. Winnicott.

<sup>2</sup>In 1992 I became an assistant director and in 1996 I began a four year term as director.

<sup>3</sup>At the same time I was commissioned by FAB to produce a guide to trainings in psychotherapy. Between 1989 and 1990 I met with 15 analytic training committees of psychoanalytic psychotherapy trainings and 11 humanistic psychotherapy trainings. Winnicott's work was rarely on the curriculum, though his work was taken more seriously by the Lacanian and Jungian trainings. Nevertheless it was possible to follow any of the trainings without any knowledge of Winnicott's work. Although this has been changing in recent years, and Winnicott is now on the curriculum at the Tavistock's courses as well as most of the analytic trainings (UKCP & BCP), it continues to be the case that many people qualify as psychotherapists and psychoanalysts without any in depth study of Winnicott's work, and consequently have insufficient recognition as to the value of his thought.

In the initial years of working for the Squiggle Foundation I became increasingly aware that it was not easy to access Winnicott's concepts, let alone see a clear picture of a theoretical matrix. I now attribute this problem to four main causes:

a. *Winnicott's style of writing and presentation of ideas* - Winnicott's independent thinking was probably intensified by his disillusionment throughout the Controversial Discussions.<sup>1</sup> His paper 'Primitive Emotional Development' of 1945 marks the beginning of his concerted effort to form his own ideas from his clinical experience.<sup>2</sup> His use of vernacular language interspersed with the technical language of Freudian and Kleinian psychoanalysis, can lend itself to misunderstanding and even confusion as to the meaning of the texts, because through the creation of a new language came new concepts and ideas.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Winnicott's spontaneous, conversational style<sup>4</sup> (freer in his later work and when addressing a non-psychoanalytic audience), can evoke an intuitive understanding of the essence of his communication; this can be problematic because it tends to obscure the new theory that he was in the process of formulating. This may also be because of Winnicott's personal equivocation about creating anything new:

b. *The volume and type of writings* - To date it is unknown<sup>5</sup> just how much Winnicott has written, but the papers that are published can be broadly categorised thus: **Paediatrics** - all those papers addressed to people working with children and their families as well as parents. **Psychoanalysis** - all those papers addressed to the analytic community. **Letters** - Winnicott wrote a huge amount of letters to colleagues as well as many others. **Abstracts and reviews** - A fragmented miscellany of published and unpublished writings.

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<sup>1</sup> Between 1941-45 discussions were held between the Kleinians and non Kleinians over what constituted psychoanalysis. (King & Steiner 1991) (see 2b)

<sup>2</sup> There is evidence from reading Winnicott's letters that this was also fuelled by the sense that something had not worked in Winnicott's experience of his personal analysis with both James Strachey and Joan Riviere.

<sup>3</sup> Some of Winnicott's developments in psychoanalysis emerge as a result of his critique of Kleinian theory and technique. In this way his work is more aligned with Freud.

<sup>4</sup> From 1947 onwards Winnicott dictated his papers to his secretary Joyce Coles. This accounts for the conversational style as well as the minor errors.

<sup>5</sup> In my role as Honorary Archivist of The Winnicott Trust I aim to catalogue all the available writings of Winnicott. (see 3c)



c. *The publications* (see **1b**) - Winnicott's volumes are collections of papers that emerged over a period of forty years. With the exception of the two main volumes,<sup>1</sup> they are presented according to themes rather than in chronological order. This was a deliberate decision by the Winnicott Publications Committee. (Davis 1987) However, the result creates a fragmented picture of his oeuvre and thus makes it appear more idiosyncratic than I think it is, and detracts from the matrix of his theory.<sup>2</sup>

d. *Few entries in the established analytic dictionaries and no comprehensive guide* - Charles Rycroft's *Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis* (1968) does refer to two or three of Winnicott's concepts, as does R.D. Hinshelwood in his *Dictionary of Kleinian Thought* (1989), although in the latter the references are fleeting and sometimes inaccurate. There is no reference to Winnicott's work in Laplanche and Pontalis whose brief was to define Freudian terminology only. There are a few books critiquing aspects of Winnicott's work, but in 1990 when I began my research there was no book that offered an in depth, comprehensive scrutiny of Winnicott's texts and demonstrated, what I came to see as, the clear theoretical matrix in his thought.

All the above factors meant that a great deal of work was required to establish a concise picture of Winnicott's theories. After three years of intensive studying and teaching of Winnicott's work, I felt the lack of a reference book; a lexicon that would exclusively explore and explicate Winnicott's use of language. I started to work on creating a synopsis for such a work. My desire was to concentrate on Winnicott's word usage and to mine the texts as deeply as possible. It was through this research process that I came to discover that not only are some of Winnicott's concepts new in psychoanalysis<sup>3</sup> but also his oeuvre offers a clear theoretical matrix that emerges out of his development of Freudian thought and his discourse with Klein.

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<sup>1</sup>Through Paediatrics to Psychoanalysis (1958) and The Maturation Processes and the Facilitating Environment (1965)

<sup>2</sup>A consistently edited Complete Works of D.W. Winnicott (in preparation) will address this problem. (see 3c)

<sup>3</sup>Notably Winnicott's theory of transitional phenomena and the development of those themes as explored in *Playing and Reality*.

## 1b Donald Woods Winnicott - the publications

This section presents an outline of Winnicott and his publications to illustrate the nature of my task to organise and produce in *The Language of Winnicott* a comprehensive account of his work.

D.W.Winnicott (1896 - 1971) was a paediatrician and psychoanalyst, whose oeuvre is made up of theoretical papers, reviews, journal articles, and letters. An avid writer from his teenage years Winnicott's first published book was *Clinical Notes on Disorders of Childhood* (William Heinemann 1931) produced as one of a Practitioner's Aid Series for paediatricians. When Winnicott published this volume he had been working as a paediatrician for seven years and was in the process of training as a psychoanalyst at The Institute of Psycho-Analysis in London. This meant that, as well as his full time work as a paediatrician, he was undergoing psychoanalysis with James Strachey and was beginning to see his own adult patients in psychoanalysis. So that, although his first publication is aimed at paediatricians, the reader can discern at this early stage of his work the influence of psychoanalytic thinking on his work with children and their families. In the Preface to this first publication Winnicott writes, '*Indirectly to Professor Sigmund Freud I am grateful for an increasing ability to enjoy investigating emotional factors.*' Later on in the Introduction he writes:

*'The child, in its difficult task of finding out how much of instinctual urges can be harnessed without leading to a clash with the ideal, needs friends. The proper friendships are those formed at school and in the immediate environment. Included in the environment is probably a doctor, and much of his work is a specialised form of friendship.'* (pp. 5-6)

These words convey the essence of Winnicott's communication throughout the whole of his work - a sensibility to the human need for reliable relationships. And it is this attitude to the individual's need for a reliable m/other/environment that characterises Winnicott's contribution to the development of psychoanalytic theory. (see **2b**)

Winnicott qualified as an adult psychoanalyst in 1934 and in the following year qualified as the first male child psychoanalyst. From this time, until his retirement from paediatrics

almost forty years later, he continued to work both as a paediatrician for the National Health Service as well as a psychoanalyst for adults in private practice. Consequently, his major contributions to the development of psychoanalytic theory have been shaped by his involvement with families and their children in his role as paediatrician, but inextricably linked with his particular experience of psychoanalysis. This will be explored further in the next section. (see **2b**)

The following two publications, Getting to know your baby (Heinemann 1945), and The ordinary devoted mother and her baby (a BBC publication) are the transcripts of talks for parents given on the radio between 1940-50. By 1957 both publications were out of print and were republished in one volume, The Child and the Family, by Tavistock Publications. In the same year, a companion volume was published, The Child and the Outside World, and the papers were addressed to parents and all professionals working with the older child in the context of society. In 1964, most of the papers from these four volumes were published in one volume - The Child, the Family and the Outside World, which during the 1960s became a popular book for all young families, as well as a text on the reading list for courses in teacher training, social work and child care.

Winnicott's first significant psychoanalytic paper was 'The Manic Defence'<sup>1</sup> that he presented to a scientific meeting of the British Psycho-Analytical Society in 1935. This was the beginning of many papers that he wrote for his psychoanalytic colleagues, and in 1958 a collection of these papers, along with those addressed to professionals working with children, was published by Tavistock entitled Through Paediatrics To Psychoanalysis. This has become one of the major volumes studied by all those interested in psychoanalysis. The complement to this volume was published in 1965, Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment, which is a collection of papers mostly addressed to psychoanalysts. In the same year another volume of Winnicott's papers, (most of which had been published in various journals between 1950-64) was published by Tavistock, The family and individual development, which is a combination of broadcasts and lectures given to practitioners working with families and children.

Meanwhile, Winnicott was teaching, supervising, and lecturing at home and abroad and before his death in 1971, two more volumes of his work were in preparation, Playing and

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<sup>1</sup>This was Winnicott's reading in paper for Associate Membership of the British Psycho-Analytical Society.

Reality and Therapeutic Consultations in Child Psychiatry. Playing and Reality has become one of the best known Winnicott volumes where Winnicott explores the themes relating to his concept, transitional phenomena, which had been developed in his 1951 paper, 'Transitional objects and transitional phenomena'. (see **2b**) In contrast, Therapeutic Consultations in Child Psychiatry is a collection of Winnicott's case studies as a child psychiatrist. This volume illustrates Winnicott's clinical psychoanalytic thinking that serves to facilitate the child or adolescent in moving on developmentally with minimalist intervention.<sup>1</sup> Many of the cases are illustrated by Winnicott's use of the squiggle game in the diagnostic interview.

When Winnicott died he left many unpublished papers, letters and clinical notes and in 1977 his widow Clare Winnicott, a social worker and also a psychoanalyst, founded The Winnicott Trust with the aim of publishing all the unpublished work. Over the next twenty years the editors of The Winnicott Trust were responsible for publishing another nine volumes of Winnicott's papers. (Davis 1987) In addition to these nine volumes, a collection of Winnicott's letters was published in 1987 and edited by Robert Rodman. To date there are 21 publications of Winnicott's works. The first five are out of print, though most of the papers are reproduced in the 1965 publication The child, the family and the outside world.

**1c** The Language of Winnicott: a dictionary of Winnicott's use of words Karnac Books, London 1996, and (with a different subtitle) a dictionary and guide to understanding his work Jason Aronson, New York 1997.

The Language of Winnicott is the most comprehensive guide to the thought of Winnicott that has been written to date. It comprises of 22 chapters which are titled with a word or phrase frequently used by Winnicott. Each chapter begins with a brief definition of the word or phrase and is followed by a number of subsections with their own subtitle. The subsections guide the reader to the salient excerpts of the relevant papers. Thus, each chapter takes the reader on a journey through the themes and illustrates the evolution of his thought over more than forty years of his working life. At the end of each chapter

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<sup>1</sup> In this sense Winnicott was one of the early pioneers in making use of psychoanalytic theory and practice to assist those not able to undergo a full analytic treatment.

there is a reference list of the papers that relates to the main bibliography that is presented chronologically and alphabetically.<sup>1</sup>

In 1997 the board of editors for 'Choice', (a magazine for libraries in North America) awarded this book 'Outstanding Academic Book of the Year'. It was translated into Portuguese for Ravinter, Brazil in 2000, French for Popesco Editions in 2001, Italian for Franco Angelini in 2002, and is due to be translated into Japanese for Seishin Shobo in 2004.

*The Language of Winnicott* is the first publication that illustrates the extent to which Winnicott's concepts have, by large sections of the psychoanalytic community, been underestimated, misunderstood, marginalised, idealised, and/or oversimplified. As already stated in the Abstract, my organisation of Winnicott's themes, alongside a step towards extending his theory, as seen in *The Language of Winnicott* and the other submitted works, significantly furthers the field for understanding and future study of Winnicott's work. I elaborate this in the following sections. (see 2 & 3)

**1d Squiggles, Clowns and Catherine wheels: violation of the self and its vicissitudes** in *Natureza Humana* (a journal in São Paulo, Brasil) 1998.

This paper was written especially for a Winnicott Centenary Conference organised by The Freud Museum and The Squiggle Foundation in 1996. The paper is a reflection on Winnicott's concept of an 'incommunicado self' associated with the 'violation of the self'. These concepts are discussed in his 1963 paper, 'Communicating and Not Communicating Leading to a Study of Certain Opposites', where he postulates a healthy corollary to the pathological split of the personality, by claiming 'the right *not* to communicate' and the necessity for an untouchable core that must never be communicated with (see 2c). Marion Milner,<sup>2</sup> with whom I discussed this point many times, was in some disagreement

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<sup>1</sup>The bibliography of Harry Kamac, that had been completed as I began my research, is included in both Kamac's and Aronson's editions. This bibliography, although the best available at the time, has now been superseded by a more scholarly bibliography created by Knud Hjulmand at the University of Copenhagen, that lists 50 more publications. This has been published in the French translation of *The Language of Winnicott* (2001), and will be the definitive bibliography for the forthcoming Complete Works. (see 3c)

<sup>2</sup>Marion Milner was a long standing friend and colleague of Winnicott's who has made her own distinct contribution to psychoanalysis. For almost twenty years, Milner attended the Squiggle seminars and through my discussions with her some of the ideas for the paper came into being.

with the notion of an 'incommunicado self'. I explore Milner's comments and use a clinical example to illustrate the themes.

I discuss Winnicott's theory 'violation of the self' in relation to 'the use of an object' and I introduce the notion of a 'surviving object' that I see as the emerging of a new concept. This is my step towards extending Winnicott's conceptualisations that I elaborate in the third part of this Context Statement (see **2d**).

**1e Editor's Foreword "A kind of French Winnicott" in André Green at the Squiggle Foundation** (Winnicott Studies Monograph Series) Karnac Books, London 2000.

This is a volume of five papers by the French psychoanalyst André Green. Four of the papers were originally lectures given to The Squiggle Foundation that I subsequently edited from transcripts of the tape recordings, in collaboration and consultation with André Green. The Foreword to the Green collection sketches the work of André Green and refers to the way Green develops some of Winnicott's themes. I comment on the reasons why a French psychoanalyst would be interested in Winnicott's work and include the distinctions between the French and British psychoanalytic cultures.

André Green is a psychoanalyst of the Société Psychanalytique de Paris and is amongst the psychoanalysts who have incorporated Winnicott's work into his own thinking. The English-speaking psychoanalytic community became aware of André Green's work when in 1979 he took up the position of the Freud Memorial Chair at University College, London. Access to his work came a few years later when the first translation of a collection of his papers was published in 1986, On private madness, even though Green had been writing and publishing in France for many years. The Squiggle Foundation had first invited André Green to lecture in the early 1980s because of his integration of Winnicott's work as exemplified in On private madness. In the Introduction to that collection, Green outlines his journey in psychoanalysis from 1953, when he began his training as a psychiatrist,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>As Green points out, 1953 was a significant year in the history of French psychoanalysis for it was, among other events, the date of the first split in the Paris Society, when Daniel Lagache and others resigned from the SPP and founded the Société Française de Psychanalyse. Soon afterwards Jacques Lacan also resigned from the SPP to join the SFP and gave the inaugural lecture on 8th July. It was also this year that Lacan started his

through to the publication of this collection 1986.<sup>1</sup> He states clearly that the main influences on his thinking are Winnicott and Lacan, and makes reference to the different cultures both of them came from - intellectualism and abstraction in France and empiricism and pragmatism in England. Green goes on to explain that he needed the British psychoanalytic writers, particularly Winnicott and Bion, for their intellectualism based on clinical experience, which for Green integrated the best of Lacan's abstraction and intellectualism and Winnicott's 'heuristic interest of paradoxes'.<sup>2</sup>

Thus the lectures written for a Squiggle audience by André Green demonstrate the way in which Green enriches his own thinking with Winnicott's most resonating themes. As the editor of *André Green at the Squiggle Foundation*, I chose four of Green's public lectures and one paper<sup>3</sup> that had already been published (International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 78 (1997):1071-1084). I present these five papers as an illustration in condensed form of the influence of Winnicott's thinking on Green's work. At the same time I show how they illuminate another way of thinking about and developing Winnicott's themes. For example Green's definition of the 'historical' adopts Winnicott's notions of absence and the fit between the external environment and the developing internal sense of self. The only way, Winnicott constantly indicates, that the past can be renegotiated by the subject, is through the *actualisation* that will occur between analysand and analyst. Psychic change is a possibility through the analyst's understanding, adaptation and interpretation of the *actualisation* within the transference/countertransference matrix. The emphasis on living through an experience with the analysand is what informs Green's theory and technique of psychoanalysis involving the construction of a new object.<sup>4</sup>

The notions of time and paradox in Winnicott's theory of transitional phenomena are also adopted by Green in his concepts - *the work of the negative* and *tertiary processes*. Green shows how 'Winnicott's concept of tolerance for psychic suffering is directly related to the

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public seminar series at the Hôpital Sainte-Anne, some of which Green attended in the 1960s, and which were to last for another 27 years.

<sup>1</sup>In the acknowledgements André Green pays tribute to Christopher Bollas for his encouragement and support. Christopher Bollas' own work represents one of the few British trained psychoanalysts who has, like Green, extended Winnicott's themes.

<sup>2</sup>p. 14 *On Private Madness* (Karnac Books 1987)

<sup>3</sup>This had been on the recommendation of André Green who had felt it would be a good complement to the other four papers.

<sup>4</sup>This links with Winnicott's theory 'creating the object' and my step towards the extension of these themes in the concept of a 'surviving object'. (see 2d)

intensity of the trauma, its duration, and its effects on psychical organisation.<sup>1</sup>

Winnicott's understanding of the meaning of an environment that facilitates, is based on the mother's capacity to appreciate distance and timing, which serves as a paradigm for psychoanalytic technique. The theme of time is something that characterises French psychoanalysis, and, as Green points out, is implicit in Winnicott's work, as is the *work of the negative*.<sup>2</sup> In addition Green enlarges on Winnicott's theories by his emphasis on the importance of the father/third, whose function is to separate mother and infant, in his themes related to what Green names *thirdness*.

The brief summaries of the submitted works as described above, clarify the development of my work on Winnicott. *The Language of Winnicott* has involved an exposition of Winnicott's theories and in the clinical paper I explore further the concepts that I came to see at the heart of Winnicott's work - *the use of an object* and *violation of the self*. My exploration and analysis of these concepts brings about my postulation of a new notion - *the surviving object*. The focus on the survival of the object is something I make use of in the clinical illustration (see **2d**). And in my Foreword to André Green's papers I comment on the different cultures of British and French psychoanalysis and indicate how Winnicott's clinically informed richness inspires new developments in Green's work particularly *the work of the negative, tertiary processes, and thirdness*. Green's thought on the efficacy of clinical psychoanalysis and the construction of a new object is linked with my notion of a surviving object (see **2d**). Thus the submitted works show a clear relationship to each other, as well as providing evidence of my development and original contribution to knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup>*Time in psychoanalysis* (2002 p. 6)

<sup>2</sup>As referred to in the Editor's Foreword introducing the fifth lecture - 'The intuition of the negative in *Playing and Reality*' (p. xiv)



## **2 EVIDENCE AND EXEMPLIFICATION THAT MY ORGANISATION OF WINNICOTT'S WORK AND MY STEP TOWARDS EXTENDING HIS THEORY CONSTITUTES AN ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE-**

This section starts with a concise account of the evolution of psychoanalysis as forged by Sigmund Freud. This is to account for Freud's epistemology that results in a Freudian paradigm in order to set out the context from which Winnicott's work grew.

### **2a Psychoanalysis – a scientific revolution**

Freud's writings on the history of psychoanalysis constitute an historic account of his process of discovery. (Freud 1910; 1914; 1925) However, Freud continued to develop his theories beyond these accounts, albeit based on these foundations, until he died in 1939. For my purpose here, I will refer to the reconstruction of Freud's work as presented by Sandler et al, who have provided their own overview of the evolution of Freud's work. I will also make reference to the editorials of James Strachey in the Standard Edition of Freud's work, Rapaport, and Laplanche and Pontalis, bearing in mind that not all these authors agree with one version of Freud's epistemology and that there exist a number of versions and interpretations of Freud's oeuvre.

Following Rapaport's account of the phases of development in ego psychology<sup>1</sup>, Sandler et al delineate Freud's work as a whole into three phases. Each phase illustrates what they call a 'frame of reference'. (Sandler et al 1997) They claim that the discoveries within these phases continue to form the fundamentals of psychoanalysis as we know it today. (Rapaport and Merton 1959) I aim here to offer a succinct account of Freud's epistemological stance as seen in these three phases of his work.

#### *The affect-trauma phase – up to 1897*

The first 'affect-trauma' phase is so called because it was the stage where Freud discovered that the hysterical symptom carried a history of emotional trauma. This came

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<sup>1</sup>Ego psychology is associated with the development of psychoanalysis that took place in the USA, largely instigated by the Viennese analysts who moved to America during the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war. The most well known like Hartmann and Rapaport, had worked with Sigmund and Anna Freud in Vienna, up to 1938.

about through his work with Joseph Breuer, an older colleague, who had worked with a young woman who suffered from severe hysterical symptoms. Over a period of time Breuer noted that the symptoms disappeared if the patient was able to remember, (under hypnosis), when and with what associations the symptom had first appeared. The important part of this process was the 'accompanying expression of affect'. Freud always paid tribute to Breuer as the discoverer of this phenomenon. *'Never before had anyone removed a hysterical symptom by such a method or had thus gained so deep an insight into its causation.'* (Freud 1910 p.13) In the history of psychoanalysis Anna O is the first patient and she named the therapy '*chimney sweeping*' and a '*talking cure*'. The hysteric, who had hitherto baffled doctors because their physical symptoms had no apparent organic cause, became the ideal patient to be helped by talking. (Breuer and Freud 1895)

Freud's capacity to discern the phenomena in his observations of Breuer's work was strongly influenced by his research in Paris during 1885-6 where he witnessed Charcot's use of hypnosis and suggestion to treat the hysteric, with some success. One of the most important insights of Charcot was learnt by Freud almost by chance, that the cause of hysteria related to sexuality<sup>1</sup>. This seed of insight would later be developed into one of Freud's most significant theories of sexual development. (Freud 1905) Sandler et al date Freud's starting point at his return from Paris in 1886 but they date the point in Freud's development where he began to realise that psychoanalysis would part company with the medical world at 1895, and this was the most significant outcome of this period of Freud's development. (Ellenberger 1970 p. 418)

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<sup>1</sup> In Freud's 1914 'On the history of the psycho-analytic movement', he refers to over hearing Charcot in conversation with Broudel [Professor of Forensic Medicine in Paris at that time], at one evening reception. Charcot became exasperated with Broudel who appeared not to believe that the woman in question had severe hysterical symptoms caused by her husband's impotence. Charcot said, 'Mais, dans des cas pareils c'est toujours la chose genitale, toujours, toujours, toujours.' Freud reports being almost paralysed with amazement and wondered why Charcot had never said this publicly. In the next paragraph he explains how he, Freud, discovered the verity of this sentence when in his study of the aetiology of neuroses, a year later, he encountered confirmation of Charcot's diagnostic. (Freud 1914, p. 14)

The 'talking cure' ie: psychoanalysis, as a form of treatment to alleviate suffering with no medical intervention in the usual way, constituted a break away from medicine and thus a new discipline was in the process of being born. As early as 1896 Freud was beginning to think of using the term 'metapsychology'<sup>1</sup> to describe his theory of the mind, as a way of emphasising the fact of the unconscious<sup>2</sup> mind and to make a distinction between psychoanalysis and other psychologies.

The focus, at the beginning of psychoanalysis, was Freud's dawning realisation that there was a significant difference between memory and fantasy. The formulation of the 'seduction theory' during the first phase of his work, was based on his assumption that his patients were bringing real memories of sexual abuse. By 1897 he began to realise that much of what was supposed to be a memory was in fact based on an intrapsychic construction – he stated that no *'hysterical symptom can arise from a real experience alone, but that in every case the memory of earlier experiences awakened in association to it plays a part in causing the symptom'*. (Freud 1896 p. 197)

This is why Sandler et al mark the end of the so-called affect-trauma phase in 1897; from then on Freud focused on the blurred boundary between the hysterics' psychical construction as distinct from the real event – raising the whole question of what actually constituted the real event. The differentiation between fantasy and reality is still at the core of all psychoanalytic work.

Through analysing his own dreams, associations and feelings towards his parents, Freud discovered the famous 'Oedipus complex'<sup>3</sup> originally named by him as the nuclear complex. The hysteric's true problem was this very complex – described by Laplanche and Pontalis as, *'...the organised body of loving and hostile wishes which the child experiences*

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<sup>1</sup> James Strachey, the editor of the *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* tracks the early use of this term from 1896, in a letter from Freud to Fliess (his colleague and collaborator), up to 1915 in his paper, 'The Unconscious', after which it became an established term defining the psychoanalytic theory of the mind. Its usage continues to be very much part of contemporary psychoanalytic vocabulary. (Laplanche & Pontalis 1973)

<sup>2</sup> The unconscious as a concept, was not a discovery of Freud's as we know from Ellenberger's historical survey of the history of dynamic psychiatry (Ellenberger 1970). But it was a concept that Freud systematised into a defined theory and subsequent psychoanalysts define their own notions of the unconscious. For example, the unconscious in Melanie Klein's theory becomes the internal world and is different from Freud's. (Mitchell 1986)

<sup>3</sup> The 'Oedipus Complex' as a term did not appear in Freud's writings before 1910, although it had been used in analytic circles before. (Laplanche & Pontalis, p. 283)

*towards its parents.'* (Laplanche and Pontalis p. 282) According to them it is the Oedipus complex that *'plays a fundamental part in the structuring of the personality, and in the orientation of human desire. It is the major axis of reference for psychopathology.'*

(Laplanche and Pontalis p. 283) The Oedipus complex constitutes the symbolic matrix at the heart of Freud's metapsychology.

### *The topographical phase – 1897-1923*

At the beginning of this phase, in a letter to Fliess,<sup>1</sup> Freud wrote about having to attain philosophical knowledge as he changed over from medicine to psychology, and as he engaged with the systematic pursuit of establishing a theory of psychoanalysis<sup>2</sup>, and as has been stated, 'metapsychology' described the set of assumptions on which psychoanalysis was based.

By 1899, with the publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud shows how far he has come from his 'seduction theory' and this is perceived by Sandler et al, to mark the most significant foundation stone of psychoanalysis as we know it today. Dreams and their significance continue to be a crucial part of any clinical analysis. In this volume we witness Freud's own self analysis as he illustrates the process of *interpreting* his own dreams. It is the *process of interpretation* of the dream that is the gateway to the unconscious.

Psychoanalysis, as a treatment for hysteria and neurosis, as well as a theory for understanding the human psyche, as shown in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, constituted an intellectual revolution. (Gay 1988) Chapter 7 of that book is known as *one of the* primary metapsychology papers, alongside Freud's series of papers written in 1915, originally entitled 'Preliminaries to a Metapsychology'.<sup>3</sup> (S.E. Volume XIV) In the paper of this series 'The Unconscious', Freud offers a precise definition of the term 'metapsychology': *'I propose that when we have succeeded in describing a psychical process in its dynamic, topographical and economic aspects, we should speak of it as a metapsychological presentation (Darstellung).'* (S.E. XIV p. 181). Laplanche and Pontalis, however, suggest narrowing down the number of metapsychological texts by 'reserving

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<sup>1</sup> Freud's mentor and friend in the early stages of his work.

<sup>2</sup> Freud was simultaneously working towards the establishment of an international organisation to safeguard the tenets of psychoanalysis. The International Psychoanalytical Association was set up in 1910 and is the 'world's primary psychoanalytic accrediting and regulatory body. It has members in 50 countries and its membership has grown from 240 in 1920 to nearly 11,000 today.' [Membership Handbook and Roster. 2003]

<sup>3</sup> Out of the twelve papers written only five were published, whilst the other seven were evidently destroyed.

description for texts that are more basic in that they develop or expound the hypotheses which underpin psychoanalytic psychology – its ‘principles’ (Prinzipien), ‘fundamental concepts’ (Grundbegriffe) and theoretical ‘models’ (Darstellungen, Fiktionen, Vorbilder). (Laplanche and Pontalis p. 250) Based on this set of criteria, following James Strachey, rather than Freud, they would place Freud’s paper, ‘A Project for a Scientific Psychology’ as the first of the metapsychological texts. During 1895, as part of the transition from medicine to psychology, as mentioned above, Freud painstakingly wrote ‘A Project for a scientific psychology’. From his letters to Fliess, it is clear that he found the process exhausting and difficult to write. He finally abandoned it and later tried to destroy it, as he did not perceive it to make a significant contribution to the theory of psychoanalysis. In his editorial note to the Standard Edition, however, James Strachey affirms the value of this text, and refers to it as an ‘invisible ghost’ that ‘haunts the whole series of Freud’s theoretical writings to the end’ and in a footnote he highlights a trail for the ‘curious student’ (S.E.V. 1 p. 290) It would appear that this is the trail that Laplanche and Pontalis chose to pursue in their research for *The Language of Psychoanalysis* and subsequently proposed to designate five other ‘strictly metapsychological texts’ after the ‘Project’, which are, in chronological order: Chapter 7 of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), ‘Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning’ (1911), ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’ (1920), ‘The Ego and the Id’ (1923), and *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* (1940). They add that Freud’s attempt in 1915 to write a book on the Preliminaries to a Metapsychology, aimed to ‘clarify and carry deeper the theoretical assumptions on which a psychoanalytic system could be founded’. (Freud 1917).

In essence the topographical model of the mind depicts three major areas of the mind – the unconscious, the pre conscious and the conscious. Sandler et al see the characteristic of the topographical phase as emphasising movement from the depths to the surface ie: from the repressed in the unconscious to consciousness. Linked with Freud’s discovery that the hysteric’s symptoms were more about traumatic memories related to wish fulfillment rather than memories of real assault (seduction theory), the topographical phase focused on the inner impulses and forces within the individual psyche and how they affected the mind.

Thus it can be seen that the second phase proves to be the period of consolidation of psychoanalysis as a theory and practice.

### *The structural phase – 1923-1939*

Sandler et al date the beginning of the structural frame of reference from 1923 with Freud's paper 'The Ego and the Id'<sup>1</sup> where he proposes a new topography<sup>2</sup>, and they point out that during the structural phase there is a shift from the emphasis on the patient's response to inner impulses to one where external reality is taken more into account. In this model the mind has three agencies, the id, the ego and the superego. The ego is seen as a structure that has to deal not only with the inner demands of instincts (sexual and aggressive) but also the demands of the outerworld (parents and authority figures). The external world, in this model, becomes one of the agencies of the mind as it 'can be a profound source of intrapsychic conflict'. Freud described the demands on the ego as being like 'three tyrannical masters' - '*the poor ego...serves three severe masters...the external world, the superego and the id.*' (Freud 1933 p. 77)<sup>3</sup>

James Strachey, in his editorial note to 'The Ego and the Id', states that the paper is the last of Freud's major theoretical writings. But he adds that, although it appears new 'and even revolutionary', it is the product of ideas that have been brewing since the early writings ie: the 'Project'. Freud himself, however, says in his Preface, that the work is an extension of the ideas he presented in 'Beyond the pleasure principle' and he emphasises that '*there are no fresh borrowings from biology, and on that account it stands closer to psychoanalysis than does Beyond the Pleasure Principle.*' (S.E. XIX p. 12)

'An Outline of Psychoanalysis', as mentioned above, is the last of the metapsychology papers, according to Strachey and Laplanche & Pontalis, and although Strachey has referred to 'The Ego and the Id' as the last major theoretical paper of Freud's, he is unequivocal about the importance of the 'Outline', stating that '*The whole work gives us a sense of freedom in its presentation which is perhaps to be expected in a master's last account of the ideas of which he was the creator.*' (S.E. XI11, p. 143) Strachey directs the reader to the '*new light thrown on whatever Freud touches*' and even '*hints at entirely*

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<sup>1</sup> Although this paper had been presented by Freud at the Berlin Conference in August 1922, and had therefore been a concept widely known by the psychoanalytical community before 1923.

<sup>2</sup> Laplanche and Pontalis do not use the term 'structural' but rather refer to the 'second psychic system' and 'second topographical conceptualisation'. (Laplanche and Pontalis 1973 p. 450)

<sup>3</sup> The London Kleinians, stemming from the Controversial Discussions are often perceived to place too much emphasis on the superego and the id at the expense of recognising the external demand. A classification and model of the environment was to be one of Winnicott's formulations that he felt was never accepted by Mrs. Klein. (see 2b and the Environment entry in *The Language of Winnicott.*)

*new developments*'. And Strachey makes clear that this is not a book for the beginner but rather a 'refresher course' for advanced students. It can be seen as Freud's epilogue that presents a succinct account of his epistemology.

### *Psychoanalysis – a scientific revolution*

The theory and practice of psychoanalysis as developed by Freud constitutes what Kuhn has described as a scientific revolution. (Kuhn 1962) That is to say that psychoanalysis, as a body of work, became an established scientific achievement, based on a combination of principal concepts that made up a 'fundamental unit' and constituted a new scientific 'paradigm'. The route to this new science was based on research methodologies of nineteenth century scientific investigation. Sandler et al comment on the scientific influences of Freud's time and how they impacted on Freud's work. Darwin's biology and theory of natural selection influenced his thought, along with the physiology of the Helmholtz school and his teacher Ernst Brücke. It is clear in the 'Project' how much the physico-chemical principles of the day dominated his thinking; and it was the laws of physics that were applied to formulate how the mental apparatus functioned. Freud also drew on the psychological determinism of his day and his investigations were based on the assumption of causality. As has been stated, in a letter to Fliess, Freud was more and more interested in getting away from medicine and his interest in creating a new discipline led him to make use of philosophy – not to turn psychoanalysis into a philosophy but rather to make use of the questions the philosopher was asking.<sup>1</sup> As Freud states at the beginning of his 'Outline', the discussion of the basic assumptions of psychoanalysis belongs to philosophical thought, even though the 'scene of action' ie: the bodily organ, cannot be ignored. The new science psychoanalysis made use of a range of research methodologies traditional to other disciplines, notably; in the sciences: medicine, neurology, physics, biology, psychology and psychiatry, and in the humanities: hermeneutics, history and philosophy. What then were the main components of Freud's research methodology for psychoanalysis?

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of duality was another philosophical influence on Freud's thought. (Bibring 1941)

### *Observation, experimentation and interpretation*

Since one of the principal tenets of psychoanalysis was the unconscious mind - a fundamental question emerged – how can the unconscious be observable? Freud's answer was that it was only the derivatives of the unconscious mind that forced their way through to the preconscious and the conscious. The derivatives of the unconscious were to be seen in symptoms, dreams, actions and language. These then became the observable phenomena and this is where a hermeneutical dimension became a relevant component of how to observe the unconscious - the study and interpretation of the manifest content of human behaviour as a clue to the latent unconscious content.

In his publication *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud demonstrates to the reader, how he developed his theory of the mind by dissecting his own dreams. This also provided a model of dream analysis and interpretation. This is what led him to his first topographical model as set out in Chapter 7, and was part and parcel of the testing of his hypotheses. Finally he created the setting in which psychoanalysis as a psychotherapeutic intervention should take place, that included the temporal, ie: an assigned time, for the same duration, on the same day, and the physical ie: the patient lying on a couch, with the analyst out of sight and seated behind. In this position all the patient had to do was to say everything that came into mind - to 'free associate' – and this became the 'fundamental rule' for the treatment. Through free associating the patient's narrative revealed the derivatives of the unconscious mind, in the same way the dream revealed the manifest content of the repressed/latent content in the unconscious. Thus the dream, and the patient's free associations were the material that the analyst could then interpret. Over the years there have been many variations and refinings of the setting, but the fact that in contemporary psychoanalysis the setting has hardly changed at all and that the 'fundamental rule' remains in tact, is testimony to the success of the analytic setting created and established by Freud over a hundred years ago.

### *Summary*

Evolving out of his scientific training and education Freud made use of some of the scientific and philosophical methods of his day to investigate the workings of the mind. As he realised he was moving away from medicine he focused on the positivist philosophies



of his day and this shifted his methodology. From 1897 onwards the Kuhnian revolution in psychoanalysis had occurred and thus a new discipline/science was born.

Freud defined his theory of psychoanalysis as a metapsychology that synthesised three standpoints – the topographical, the dynamic and the economic. The topographical, as described above, consists of a model of the mind divided into the unconscious, the pre conscious and the conscious; and the other model (described as the structural model by Sandler et al) divides the mind into the id, the ego and the superego. The latter model does not replace the previous – but rather complements and extends the first topography. The *dynamic* refers to '*mental processes as being the outcome of the interplay of forces*' (Sandler et al p. 31) - the various internal and external conflicts that place pressure on the ego, whereas the *economic viewpoint* '*underlines the importance of variations in the quantity of mental forces and of the relative strength of such forces (conceived of as mental energies)*.' (Sandler et al p. 31). At the core of Freud's metapsychology is the symbolic matrix of the Oedipus complex.

In Freud's 'Two encyclopaedia articles' (S.E. XV111) Freud delineates '*The cornerstones of psychoanalysis*' as:

*'The assumption that there are unconscious mental processes, the recognition of the theory of resistance and repression, the appreciation of the importance of sexuality and of the Oedipus complex – these constitute the principal subject-matter of psychoanalysis and the foundations of its theory. No one who cannot accept them all should count himself a psychoanalyst.'* (S.E. XV111 p. 247)

The evolution of Freud's work always involved the patient and analyst at the heart of his theory shaping the development of clinical psychoanalysis – the transference - interpretation matrix. From this point of view, all psychoanalysts, working with Freud and coming after Freud, had the advantage of Freud's established paradigm: As Kuhn points out, it is only from the established paradigm of a new science that shifts can be made. This brings us to Winnicott and the question that concerns the operation of a paradigm shift.

## 2b Winnicott's theoretical matrix

Here I present a brief account of the theoretical matrix of Winnicott's work as I have come to see it during the course of my research. I claim that my organisation of Winnicott's work, as illustrated in *The Language of Winnicott*, amplified by the other submitted works, and underlined in this context statement, demonstrates that the symbolic matrix of Freud's work is ever present in Winnicott's thought, and thus, as Green asserts, 'Donald W. Winnicott's recapitulation was in continuation with Freud's work. The author did not break off with Freud but rather completed his work.' (Green 2000 p. 70) Green is referring to the way in which Winnicott brought psychoanalysis into the *human nature* frame of reference; in and of itself a philosophical concept. And the majority of writers on Winnicott affirm the value of this particular extension of Freud's metapsychology<sup>1</sup>. (Davis, 1987; Goldman 1993; Green 2000; Rudnytsky 1989 and all the other secondary sources in the bibliography).

Throughout my account I occasionally refer to some aspects of the work of Melanie Klein, in order to show how the intellectual environment of the British Psycho-Analytical Society (during and post the Controversial Discussions)<sup>2</sup> impacted on some of Winnicott's conceptions.

As an addendum to my outline of Winnicott's principal theories I add a list of the relevant entries in *The Language of Winnicott* to indicate the many concepts and nodal points that relate to the principal theory. Thus I introduce points for discussion related to the question of whether or not Winnicott's oeuvre constitutes a paradigm shift in psychoanalytic theory.

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<sup>1</sup> Although there are two authors who see his work as a distortion of Freud's theory. (Greenberg & Mitchell 1983)

<sup>2</sup> Between 1941 and 1945 the British Psycho-Analytical Society were debating the issues relating to the development of psychoanalysis. These discussions became known as the Controversial Discussions and, fundamentally, they were about the different interpretations of Freud's theories. The disagreements focused on Anna Freud's development of her father's work and Melanie Klein's different emphasis and new innovations. (Petot 1979; 1982; Hinshelwood 1989; Kristeva 2001) The consequence of the debates was what became known as a 'gentlemen's agreement' in settling the dispute between Anna Freud and Melanie Klein. There were to be two strands of the training so that candidates should choose whether to follow the Freudian training programme or the Kleinian. There were many analysts who did not want to align themselves with one or the other and they became known as the middle group. There have been many developments since then but the three groups characterised the training and the British Psycho-Analytical Society so that it is presently very difficult NOT to be a member of one of the groups, since the candidate is perceived as belonging to a group because of her training analyst's membership to a group. (Kohon 1986)

### *Human nature - Winnicott's frame of reference*

Whilst the foundation stone of psychoanalysis was set on the *discovery of the mind* through the study and interpretation of the hysteric's symptoms, implicit in Freud's work, is the study of human nature. When Winnicott came to study psychoanalysis, thanks to Freud, he already had a model of the mind and a Freudian paradigm at his disposal. The fact that James Strachey, Winnicott's analyst, was involved in translating and editing the works of Freud during the period of analysing Winnicott, must have also made a significant impact on Winnicott's experience of analysis. (Davis 1987) Alongside his experience of being an analysand, Winnicott was working as a paediatrician and was in daily contact with the problems of family life - parents and their babies and children. The dominant question that preoccupies Winnicott's work relates to *the human condition and what it means to be a subject* – his questions are to do with the meaning of life and what makes life worth living. It is my view that very early on in his work Winnicott intuited Freud's quest to place psychoanalysis in the frame of human nature.

Whilst never abandoning Freud's instinct theory, and always grateful for Melanie Klein's focus on the '*importance of the localization of all that goes on between eating and defaecation...the inside of the body*',<sup>1</sup> (Davies 1987) illustrated through his daily paediatric work, from 1942 Winnicott came to view the individual always in relation to the m/other.<sup>2</sup> Crucially it would be the m/other's negotiation of the stages of dependency for the human infant, that was key to the success or failure of the individual's emotional development.

So, the matrix of Winnicott's work, as I have come to see it, is made up of one overarching theory - *the sense of self*. This is the theory that is intrinsic to all others. The three principal conceptions that structure the matrix are - *the mother-infant relationship, primary creativity and transitional phenomena*. It is this edifice that characterises and distinguishes Winnicott's oeuvre. In the Introduction to *The Language of Winnicott* (pp. 1-4) I offer a condensed introductory overview that I recapitulate here.

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<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately it has not been possible to refer in detail to the influence of Melanie Klein's work on Winnicott. My assessment is that Freud's work is at the core of Winnicott's work and it could be said that Klein's work demonstrates a different kind of paradigm shift in psychoanalysis.

<sup>2</sup> This was the year Winnicott describes as suddenly realising that 'there's no such thing as a baby' – and it was also around this time that he says he hadn't thought of a baby as a human being before. Green asserts that this was not because of his experience as a paediatrician but because of his personal analysis. (Clancier & Kalmonavitch 1984 p. 120)

### *Parent-infant relationship*

Winnicott's realisation in 1942 that *'there's no such thing as a baby'* meant that he never again conceptualised without recognising the infant's *dependency* on the object; because of the baby's dependent state the m/other's attitude would colour her baby's internal world and impact on his emotional development. Winnicott's work with Mrs. Klein during his early development as a psychoanalyst, assisted him to focus on the internal world of the new born infant and the developing child. However, Mrs. Klein's development of Freud's work did not take sufficient account of the other, for Winnicott. In his daily contact with families he could not ignore the facts that showed him the interrelationship between the baby's emotional development and the stages of dependency on the object which became a theory in and of itself. So in discourse particularly with Klein and the Kleinians, Winnicott wanted to emphasise the crucial nature of the environment and how its psychical qualities influence and shape the subject's psyche.

In the early 1950s Winnicott began to refer to the 'environment-individual set up' to emphasise the power and responsibility of the real object in the world and how her subjective states of mind impacted on the emotional development of the new born infant. He classified two distinct early patterns of relating between mother and infant that was simply good enough or not good enough, and for the rest of his working life he did not veer from this position - the baby had either been held or not in the early weeks and months. Developing this theme in his paper 'Providing for the Child in Health and Crisis' (1962), Winnicott makes a clear correlation between the baby's age and the failure of the environment and states that the earlier the failure the more severe the mental illness. The subject's sense of self is shaped by the adaptation of the environment/object to the baby's needs/state of dependency. This is the emphasis in Winnicott's theory concerning the roots of the sense of self.

In the light of Freud's paper, 'The ego and the id', the environment played as big a part for Freud on the shaping of the ego, as did the superego and the id - 'the poor ego...serves three severe masters...the external world, the superego and the id.' (Freud 1933 p. 77) Whilst Winnicott did not deny the importance of the biological factors on the shaping of the sense of self, described by him as 'imaginative elaboration', his claim for

the recognition of the impact of the environment was in line with Freud's work; as already stated I think he came to emphasise it because he felt it was something being diminished by Mrs. Klein and some of her followers.

The relevant entries in *The Language of Winnicott* related to *the parent-infant relationship* theory are: ALONE, BEING, CREATIVITY, DEPENDENCY, ENVIRONMENT, HOLDING, MOTHER, and PRIMARY MATERNAL PREOCCUPATION.

### *Primary creativity*

*Primary creativity* could be seen as Winnicott's version of instinct theory. His emphasis is on how the biological need in the baby is attended to by the mother/environment. It is this *attending to* the infant's biological need (which at the very early stage of life is not separable from emotional need), through the mother's emotional response, that will constitute what Winnicott describes as the theoretical first feed.

*The theoretical first feed is represented in real life by the summation of the early experiences of many feeds. After the theoretical first feed the baby begins to have material with which to create.* (Winnicott [1953] *Human Nature* (1988) p. 106)

For Winnicott the baby is born into the world equipped with a creative potential. This inherited tendency (innate predisposition based on bodily needs and the impulse to grow) is bound up with the sensations in the body and the baby's state of absolute dependence. The mother's ability to recognise her baby's predicament helps her to respond to his needs ie: offer her breast.<sup>1</sup> This very first contact between mother and infant is the beginning of a gradual building up of the baby's illusion of omnipotence. The illusion of omnipotence is the baby's experience that his need (hunger) creates the breast (food). Winnicott believes this to be the crucial moment that constitutes the foundations for all further development. The mother's ability to adapt to her baby's needs facilitates the illusion of omnipotence. This is the theoretical first feed.

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<sup>1</sup> But, as Winnicott stresses, the offering has to involve the mother's *desire* to provide what is needed through a deep identification with her baby's predicament of absolute dependence.

*At least until we know more I must assume that there is creative potential, and that at the theoretical first feed the baby has a personal contribution to make. If the mother adapts well enough the baby assumes that the nipple and the milk are the results of a gesture that arose out of need, the result of an idea that rode in on the crest of a wave of instinctual tension.* (Winnicott [1953] Human Nature (1988) p. 110)

The wave of instinctual tension ie: hunger, has to be met by the mother's adaptation (deep identification) to her baby's needs and IF the timing is good enough then the baby's instinct tension is released and as a consequence he starts to realise that his hunger can be satiated by something that he does - 'I cry and the food comes'. His action does not just satisfy hunger in the way Freud wrote about the instinct, but, and critically, it provides the baby with an illusion that he has created the object. 'I cry and the food comes because I made it arrive by my need/crying'. And it is this illusion of omnipotence that contributes to the baby's ability to distinguish between Me and Not me. Winnicott wrote a poem to illustrate the sequence relating to the development of a sense of self arising out of the illusion of omnipotence. It is in Chapter 9 of Playing and Reality and written in 1967.

*When I look I am seen, so I exist.  
I can now afford to look and see.  
I now look creatively and what I apperceive I also perceive.  
In fact I take care not to see what is not there to be seen (unless I am tired).*  
(Winnicott [1967] 1971 p. 114)

The potential to create the object<sup>1</sup>, therefore, exists in the newborn baby and for this potential to develop into a capacity, the mother must be able to identify with her baby's state of absolute dependence: Winnicott named this particular quality of identification - 'primary maternal preoccupation'. The not good enough mother forces the baby into finding a way of protecting his illusion of omnipotence (which will have occurred only fleetingly), and the subject's way of protecting the self is to become compliant to the (inappropriate) demands of the environment. In his 1960 paper, 'Ego distortion in terms

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<sup>1</sup> Winnicott makes a point of saying that he 'puts great stress on this part of the study of human nature' (Human Nature p. 111) It is an alternative to seeing only projection and introjection in the newborn infant. Winnicott states that he wants to assume that in each infant, at the beginning there is 'creative potential' – that the baby at the theoretical first feed has a personal contribution to make.

of true and false self', Winnicott shows how the development of a false compliant self is based on the baby's need to protect his primary creativity lodged in his true self.

For the mother to be able to provide the theoretical first feed she will have to be able to *survive* her new born baby's ruthless need for her. This *ruthlessness* is what Winnicott earlier named *primary aggression* but later in his work he described as the necessary *destruction* of the object and he explores *how* the good enough external object *survives* the baby's primitive attack/need. This is another aspect of what occurs at the theoretical first feed and is associated with the baby's excited states and the mother's capacity to identify with her baby's communications. The good enough mother survives by not becoming overwhelmed by the baby's expression of intense instinct tension, and she is able to tolerate her baby's agitated states in her effort to find out and understand through her empathic attention. The mother who is not able to tolerate this ordinary demand but instead tends to feel attacked by the baby and even persecuted by her overwhelming feelings projected on to the baby, is the mother who does not survive.<sup>1</sup> And however much she wants to do well by her infant she will in fact fail her baby and impact severely on his developing sense of self.

The relevant entries in *The Language of Winnicott* to the theory of *primary creativity* are: AGGRESSION, ANTISOCIAL TENDENCY, ENVIRONMENT, HATE, HOLDING, REGRESSION, and PSYCHESOMA.

### *Transitional phenomena*

Through his observation and understanding of the infant's early predicament Winnicott offers a theory that accounts for the baby's inner experience and journey towards the capacity to symbolise.<sup>2</sup> This is where Winnicott builds on Freudian theory of erotogenic zones appertaining to the lines of development by studying the relationship between early auto erotic impulses ie: between thumb sucking and the acquiring of an object like a doll or teddy. Winnicott named the special toy the *transitional object* and the techniques

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<sup>1</sup>This aspect of primary creativity was developed especially in Winnicott's later work particularly in one of his last papers 'The use of an object and relating through identifications'. The surviving object is an internalised object arising out of the environment's good enough adaptation. (see 2d)

<sup>2</sup>The spatula game, as described in one of Winnicott's early papers, 'The observation of infants in a set situation' (1941), shows the beginnings of the notions he develops in the early 1950s of transitional phenomena.

employed to take the infant from one stage to the next *transitional phenomena*. In terms of good enough emotional development the baby is being helped to separate his inner world from the outer world. But he is only able to do this if the real object/environment/mother is able to adapt to his real needs and it is because of the satiating of his needs that he can start to build up a sense of what the real world can provide. The necessary action of separating inner from outer, Me from Not-me, is in essence, a journey from unawareness to awareness. Winnicott details the stages of this process and describes how it leads on to the baby's ability to play.

The capacity to play creatively comes about through the successful negotiation of this important transitional process that is also described as an intermediate area, because it is neither inside nor outside but rather *in between*. Later on in the papers of *Playing and Reality*, Winnicott elaborates further on the inner experiences of human beings in relation to what they choose to do and how they feel in their every day tasks, like listening to a concert or playing football. This theory not only offers psychoanalysis a new way of understanding human development, but also gives fresh thinking to the nature of the analytic relationship during the analytic hour as an *illustration* of transitional phenomena. (see in particular Chapters 1 and 4 in *Playing and Reality*). In this *potential space* transitional states of mind can be experienced between and within the dyadic relationship.

The paradox of transitional phenomena, (that they are both inside and outside and yet neither), must be tolerated and not resolved; this is central to Winnicott's theory. In his later work he came to realise that playing and transitional phenomena were all part of cultural experience and this is why the theory could be applied to all areas of living. However, he also points out in his paper 'Playing: Creative activity and the search for the self' (Chapter 4 *Playing and Reality*) that there can be no true playing if the sense of self had not sufficiently developed.

This way of seeing the psychoanalytic encounter brings a new dimension and extension to Freud's technique of interpreting the patient's free associations. The focus is no longer simply on the interpretation of the manifest content of the patient's free associations, in order to get at the latent unconscious content. Now, in Winnicott's model, the focus zooms in on the analyst *facilitating* the analysand's ability to play, because it is only through playing that the patient can discover the sense of self. This is another example of how



Winnicott transposes a natural human interaction, observed by him in paediatrics and psychoanalysis, into analytic technique. He says that if the patient cannot play then the analyst must wait until there is a time that he is able. This waiting requires a different kind of technique.<sup>1</sup>

The relevant entries in *The Language of Winnicott* to the conception *transitional phenomena* are: CREATIVITY, PLAYING, REGRESSION, SPATULA GAME, SQUIGGLE GAME and TRANSITIONAL PHENOMENA.

### *The sense of self*

As stated above, Winnicott's explicit study of human nature and emotional development constitutes an overarching conception *the sense of self* making Winnicott's work essentially a theory of the self. His questions are concerned with what constitutes the *sense of self* and how does it come into being? In the last decade of his life Winnicott's quest is to explore the complexities involved with how the individual gave meaning to the life they lived.

As has been seen, developmentally, the *sense of self* begins at the theoretical first feed when and where the baby's *primary creativity* could begin to be realised. But the self did not fully come into being until the third or fourth month of life as the baby began to be able to distinguish between Me and Not-me. The environment/m/other was entirely responsible for whether or not this stage would be reached. The more failing the environment the more the baby would have to enlist techniques to protect the true self by developing a compliant false self. This failing is associated with the notion of gross impingements that interrupt the infant's continuity of being. So that what appears to be a good environment may not necessarily be good enough for that particular baby.

Whilst not denying the fact of innate biological - *inherited tendencies* - in all new born babies, Winnicott's focus is definitely on the m/other's function in identifying with the baby's dependent state. This combination of physiological and emotional nurturing from the environment is the only way in which the baby's nature and inherited tendencies can be realised. Winnicott's notion of the environment, influenced by Darwin, and in line with

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<sup>1</sup> As discussed by Winnicott in 'The use of an object and relating through identifications'. (1971)

the work of Freud and Anna Freud, is essentially a psychic environment where the baby's well being comes about from how the mother feels about her baby and how this affects her response to him. This theory necessarily takes into account how the mother has felt as a baby and the quality of holding she has received from her mother. Winnicott's work on true and false self is an important contribution to psychoanalytic theory because it helps the analyst to keep in contact with monitoring the shades of true and false experience within the transference matrix.<sup>1</sup>

All the entries in *The Language of Winnicott* are relevant to the conception *the sense of self* as the overarching principle theory; entries that focus on the sense of self are: ALONE, BEING, COMMUNICATION, CONCERN, CREATIVITY, DEPRESSION, EGO and SELF.

### *Summary*

Above I show how my research of Winnicott's work that results in the publication of *The Language of Winnicott*, clarifies the theoretical matrix of Winnicott's oeuvre. I show that the principal theories structuring this matrix are: *the parent-infant relationship, primary creativity and transitional phenomena*, and that the overarching theory is *the sense of self*.

As I have pointed out, Freud's emphasis is on the mental apparatus and how it is affected by the oedipus complex – Freud's core theory. Whereas Winnicott places an emphasis on how the sense of self comes into being from the early parent-infant relationship. So that the Freudian paradigm is shifted without losing the essential components of Freud's metapsychology and the centrality of the symbolic matrix – Oedipus and the primal scene. Winnicott's emphasis on human nature – a philosophical concept in its own right – and subjectivity and paradox is one of the reasons why the French psychoanalytic world have long appreciated Winnicott's work.

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<sup>1</sup> A false self can often hide serious disturbance as Winnicott points out in 'Classification: Is there a psychoanalytic contribution to psychiatric classification?' (1959) The theory of true and false self also relates to Winnicott's work on regression as seen in the entry REGRESSION in *The Language of Winnicott* and 'Metapsychological and clinical aspects of regression within the psychoanalytic set-up' (1954).

In the so-called Tailpiece to *Playing and Reality*<sup>1</sup> Winnicott writes:

*'I am proposing that there is a stage in the development of the human being that comes before objectivity and perceptibility. At the theoretical beginning a baby can be said to live in a subjective or conceptual world. The change from the primary state to one in which objective perception is possible is not only a matter of inherent or inherited growth process; it needs in addition an environmental minimum. It belongs to the whole vast theme of the individual travelling from dependence towards independence. This conception-perception gap provides rich material for study. I postulate an essential paradox, one that we must accept and that is not for resolution. This paradox, which is central to the concept, needs to be allowed and allowed for over a period of time in the care of each baby.'* (Winnicott 1971 p. 151)

I think this paragraph highlights one of the reasons why André Green asserts that Winnicott completes Freud's work<sup>2</sup> and that *The Language of Winnicott* proves that Winnicott is 'truly the greatest mind of psychoanalysis after Freud.'<sup>3</sup> In my discussion in the new clinical paper I refer to Green's own concept, 'the dead mother complex', because it relates to my clinical work and provides a clear use of both Freud and Winnicott. (see 3c)

## **2c Violation of the self and the use of an object**

In the first part of this section I explore the questions that preoccupied Winnicott in his last decade regarding the facilitating environment and the individual's capacity to 'live creatively' and 'feel real'. The core concepts of his oeuvre, as I show below, address these questions. Through my exploration of Winnicott's meaning of destruction and survival in his last seminal paper 'The use of an object and relating through identifications', I suggest that the concept of a 'surviving object' starts to take shape. My thinking, that furthers the

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<sup>1</sup> A volume of papers which, for me, are equivalent to Freud's 'Outline', in that they are Winnicott's epilogue and could be seen to represent his particular shape of a new kind of metapsychology.

<sup>2</sup> Laplanche & Pontalis make a point of noting that Freud himself 'acknowledged that he had been late in recognising the full implications of the primal link to the mother...' (Laplanche & Pontalis 1973 p. 285)

<sup>3</sup> This phrase was devised by André Green for the jacket cover of *The Language of Winnicott* and is developed in his paper 'The posthumous Winnicott: on Human Nature' which was one of the Winnicott Centenary lectures presented on June 29th 1996, and included as the fourth chapter in *André Green at the Squiggle Foundation*.

concept of a surviving object, constitutes my step towards extending Winnicott's theory. I discuss these ideas in the second part of this section.

In the clinical paper of the submitted works I analyse Winnicott's diagrams that illustrate the two distinct patterns of relating within the 'environment-individual set-up' and show that in 1952 Winnicott's focus is on the pathological split in the personality. This basic split occurs as a result of cumulative gross impingements from the environment that causes the subject to withdraw. By 1963 Winnicott elaborates this notion and names it 'violation of the self' in his paper 'Communicating and not communicating leading to a study of certain opposites'. He posits a healthy corollary to the pathological split and makes a claim for the subject's right not to communicate<sup>1</sup>. In this important 1963 paper Winnicott postulates the notion of an incommunicado self saying that '*each individual is an isolate, permanently non-communicating, permanently unknown, in fact unfound*', and he states that '*rape, and being eaten by cannibals, these are mere bagatelles as compared with the violation of the self's core, the alteration of the self's central elements by communication seeping through the defences*.' (p. 187) This extreme way of describing this notion emphasises that the psychical qualities of the object in relation to the subject traumatise in a way not matched by physical impingement. Winnicott stresses the need for the parent/analyst to appreciate the nature of a secret. In one type of secret it is appropriate that the subject is able to keep a secret from the object because this is a sign of health associated with privacy and boundaries.<sup>2</sup> But another kind of secret is not helpful to the subject because it is based on a lack of trust in the object and a need to withdraw.<sup>3</sup> These themes anticipate Winnicott's final 1968 paper 'The use of an object and relating through identifications' where the focus is on the survival of the object. This I discuss later - first a word on 'objects'.

Winnicott designates two sets of objects: subjective objects and objects objectively perceived. That set of objects that come about as a consequence of the early parent-

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<sup>1</sup> These themes are part of Winnicott's theory of communication that I explicate in the Communication entry in *The Language of Winnicott*.

<sup>2</sup> Themes explored by Masud Khan in his collection *The privacy of the self* (Khan 1974)

<sup>3</sup> Withdrawal from relationships with others causes an arrest in self development and therefore a lack of emotional nourishment.

infant relationship when the baby is merged with the environment are subjective objects whereas the set of objects that occur as the baby is able to separate Me from Not-me are objects objectively perceived. The internal journey from the merged state (apperception) to the separate state (perception) is facilitated by his use of the transitional object which for a period of time is absolutely essential for the baby as he struggles to separate. Part of this process involves the internalisation of the experience of being cared for and loved and, crucially for his sense of self, survived. This is what is played out on the transitional object during this stage of development. It is the transitional object that has to survive being loved and hated just as the parent of the baby earlier on. Through this play there occurs a deconstruction of the external object in the baby's mind that contributes to the baby's ability to distinguish between Me and Not-me.

The object that is objectively perceived defines the baby's growing awareness of being separate but he can only separate if he has first of all taken something of substance inside. Before making the journey towards symbolisation he has to have had the experience of a good enough mother towards whom he felt omnipotent in the sense of having his needs met. Initially the baby is not aware of what he needs but when he receives what he needs he has the illusion that he created the object. This is the necessary step that provides the illusion of being God.<sup>1</sup> Once this illusion has occurred often and consistently enough it will lead on to the subject establishing a sense of self. This is the prerequisite to the next stage of disillusionment and a necessary process of discovering that you are not God, but '*merely a speck in the universe*' (Winnicott [1967](1988) p. 101) Disillusionment is a crucial aspect in the process of becoming a self and sets the stage for living creatively.<sup>2</sup>

The infant in his state of absolute dependency needs to be seen by the mother in order to feel alive. Looking and being seen are the focus of primary identification and are both real and illusory, both emotional and physical. The object is part of the Not-me world but it will always be coloured by the baby's apperception and this colouring is rooted in subjective objects and the area of illusion of omnipotence. From being-seen comes the sense of

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<sup>1</sup> As I explicated in 2b related to the theoretical first feed

<sup>2</sup> 'Living creatively' of 1970, is a paper written by Winnicott just before his death where he distinguishes between creative living and the artist's creative endeavour.

being and thus there emerges a space in which to dream and to play. This is the potential space of transitional phenomena leading on to the capacity to use symbols.

In Winnicott's crowning 1968 paper; 'The use of an object and relating through identifications', he posits a sequence of object relating and clarifies the above process by his focus on the relationship between the subject's destruction of the object and the object's survival of the subject's attack. If the sequence is negotiated successfully (only through the object's survival) then the subject is facilitated to 'use the object':

*'...after "subject relates to object" comes "subject destroys object" (as it becomes external); and then may come "object survives destruction by the subject"...*

*A new feature thus arrives in the theory of object-relating. The subject says to the object: "I destroyed you," and the object is there to receive the communication. From now on the subject says: "Hullo object!" "I destroyed you." "I love you." "You have value for me because of your survival of my destruction of you." "While I am loving you I am all the time destroying you in (unconscious) fantasy.'* (Winnicott [1968]1971 p. 90)

For me this sequence implies the process of internalising a surviving object. The crucial part of the sequence is that the object is there to receive the communication - ie: the object is able to *receive* the subject's loving destruction, which constitutes the object's survival. Because of the object's ability, the subject is helped to experience that her destructiveness has been survived by the object. This is the essential experience that will lead on to the establishment of an internal surviving object. Without an intrapsychic surviving object the subject is not able to distinguish between her projections and the integrity of the other. This is clear in Winnicott's theory and I think it lends itself to be taken further. **I suggest that a surviving object cannot be fully established until the emotional tasks of adolescence have been completed. Therefore, the intrapsychic surviving object is the result of a developmental process that is ongoing throughout childhood and reaches a particular peak of growth at the onset of adulthood. From then on, the continued consolidation, enrichment and growth of the internalised surviving object comes about through ongoing interpsychic and personal relationships.** This crucial internal resource is the key to 'creative living' and 'feeling real'.

The corollary of the notion of a surviving object is a non-surviving object ie: the experience (cumulative reactions to impingements) and thus the internalisation of an external object that has not survived the subject's destructive impulse.<sup>1</sup> In such cases, a non-surviving object dominates the internal picture of the analysand and overwhelms the undeveloped surviving object. The analytic setting offers the opportunity for an undeveloped surviving object to start to grow through the new relationship within the transference-interpretation matrix. Winnicott's poem depicts the sequence involved in looking and being seen and shows an aspect of the birth of a surviving object.

Subjective objects are our resource for a life that continues to become meaningful and it is the details of the journey from 'looking' to 'being seen' to 'taking care not to see what is not there to be seen', that involves a new object being formed - the surviving object. I think this is the most important object of all for a life that may be lived to the absolute full. It is with the establishment of the surviving object that desire is allowed full reign.

## **2d A step towards extending Winnicott's theory**

In this section I explore further the notion of a surviving object. I address two aspects that I feel are implicit in Winnicott's work – desire and sexuality.<sup>2</sup> In other words the apparent gap in his work is something that I think he took for granted and the Freudian core of his work is ever present ie: the Freudian symbolic matrix of sexual development in relation to Oedipal issues and the primal scene.<sup>3</sup> I set out to show why I think adolescence to be the most crucial time of emotional development. I conclude that my step towards extending Winnicott's theory, by articulating what is already present in his work, is the notion that a surviving object cannot be fully established until the tasks of adolescence are complete and that this necessarily involves sexual development.

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<sup>1</sup> I think this notion of a non-surviving object is related to Bion's notion of a projective-identification-rejecting-object as postulated in his paper, 'The theory of thinking' (p. 117).

<sup>2</sup> Green asserts that Winnicott does speak about sexuality even if he does not name it. (Clancier and Kalmanovitch p. 124).

<sup>3</sup> This is the area I explore in the discussion of my new clinical paper. (see 3c)

## *Desire and destruction*

Although Winnicott's work is generally not associated with desire, I think that the development of the capacity to feel desire is intrinsic to the notion of the surviving object<sup>1</sup>. Winnicott makes a distinction between need and desire and as has been illustrated above, the new born infant needs to feel that he is creator of the world in order to feel real. Paraphrasing the mother's message to the infant in her role as object presenter Winnicott writes:

*'Come at the world creatively, create the world...next comes...the world is in your control.'*  
(p. 101 [1967] (1988))

I suggest that the process involved in creating the object, (as described in the theoretical first feed), gives birth to the capacity to feel desire. In other words, to create the object is the first stage towards the development of the capacity to feel desire, but this will only be facilitated by the environment/object that survives. As early as 1945 in 'Primitive Emotional Development' Winnicott postulates the roots of desire when he discusses the problem of satisfaction in the mother-infant relationship. He writes, *'To not want, as a result of satisfaction, is to annihilate the object.'* (Winnicott 1945 p. 153) In a footnote related to this theme he states that in addition to this fact, a satisfactory feed could spell disaster for the baby because he could feel *'fobbed off'*. *'He intended...to make a cannibalistic attack and he has been put off by an opiate, the feed'*. (p. 154) The facilitating environment adapts to needs but has to feel when it's right to de-adapt and fail. It is the time of de-adaptation when the baby will start to feel that his effort is rewarded. This is where I see the roots of the capacity to feel desire being set down and it is entirely associated with the mother allowing for and surviving the cannibalistic attack. I see a sequence from an internal contact with a sense of desire followed by the actioning of desire. The process of attaining the object of desire can only come about if the subject has a sense of entitlement and this cannot come about unless a surviving object has been internalised and is in the process of developing itself. This process begins at the theoretical first feed as outlined above.

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<sup>1</sup> Just as I would see the oedipal constellation being intrinsic to the notion of a 'surviving object'.



Destruction is intrinsic to the subject's capacity to move from object relating to object usage. Aggression is inherent and part of the life force we are all born with and it is what keeps us alive. The object is destroyed at the same time it is created - in unconscious fantasy. The aggression that is ruthless (or preruth) is the same as primary destructiveness and primary creativity; the infant needs an external object to survive so that he can begin to see the world as it is. This is not so different from Freud's understanding of the movement from the pleasure principle to the reality principle; it adds another dimension to Freud's work.

I will now explicate my understanding of Winnicott's sequence from object relating to object usage.

1 Subject relates to object - This is the baby at the beginning who is unaware of the care he receives and is merged with the m/other during the phase of absolute dependence. The baby is ruthless during this stage and he cannot know the demands he puts on the environment to attend to his needs. At this stage it is paramount that the baby does not know what he is doing. The mother must protect him from knowing how demanding he is. This will help him to get on with the tasks of being out of the womb and adjusting to his new predicament.

2 Subject destroys object - This is the baby who is beginning to perceive that the mother is part of the Not-me world. As the baby starts to see the same person in a different way so the previous imago of the mother is destroyed. This is the time of relative dependence when the baby is moving from total unawareness to a developing awareness of the environment. The previous fusion of the environment mother and the object mother that made the baby feel he had two different mothers, begins to break down and the baby sees that both mothers are actually one and the same mother.

3 Object survives destruction by the subject - The external object (mother/analyst) keeps integrity and a sense of difference and, essentially, does not retaliate. In other words the mother is able to tolerate the projections, fears, and anxieties and is able to empathise and understand how the baby must feel through a deep identity based on her experience as a baby. The same mother is aware of the reality principle so that she is able to help the baby with the transition from merger to separateness. Essential to Winnicott's theory of

the use of an object is that, 'There is no anger in the destruction of the object ...though there could be said to be joy at the object's survival.' (p. 93) It is this joy that will lead to the consolidation and shaping of the internal surviving object.

These three stages are the minutiae of object relationships from the beginning and are in constant dynamic relationship throughout each interaction throughout each stage of development throughout life. And each stage of growing will have its specific tasks concerning the way in which the surviving object develops inside.

### *Sexuality and adolescence*

Winnicott hardly ever refers to sexual development but, as I have stated, across his writing there is an implicit acceptance of the oedipus complex and sexual development, and there are references that provide evidence that it was generally known that Winnicott worked with his neurotic patients as the classical analysts of his day. (Rayner 1991) In some recordings of his discussion of a child case in 1966, (that have recently come to light in the archives of The Winnicott Trust), it is quite clear that his clinical thinking includes the awareness of sexual development with the symbolic primal scene at the core of the child's struggles. Therefore I see his theory as adding something to Freud's work, in relation to the aspect of survival. For example in 1958 Winnicott refers to the essential aloneness after sexual intercourse in his paper 'The capacity to be alone'. I think this depicts the relaxation involved in a sense of relief that occurs as each partner experiences the survival of the sexual act, physically and psychically. Four years previously there is one paragraph in his 1954 paper, 'Aggression in relation to emotional development' where he anticipates the themes of 'the use of an object'.

*'In adult and mature sexual intercourse, it is perhaps true that it is not the purely erotic satisfactions that need a specific object. It is the aggressive or destructive element in the fused impulse that fixes the object and determines the need that is felt for the partners actual presence, satisfaction, and survival'. (p. 218)*

I think Christopher Bollas' comments on the sequence of object relating to object usage in sexual intercourse are pertinent here.<sup>1</sup> He says that there has to be trust in the other's survival because as the object relating commences in foreplay the lovers are involved in destroying the relationship by '*surrendering to that ruthlessness inherent in erotic excitement.*' In my view this means that there has to exist an integrated capacity for concern within the reciprocal need for each lover to reach orgasm. And for this to be truly pleasurable and enriching for each partner, there has to exist an intrapsychic surviving object as well as the consistent experience of each one surviving each other's destruction. Over time the destruction of the relationship both through social and sexual intercourse, only serves to contribute towards a further consolidation of the internal surviving object in each subject. Destruction in fantasy is a crucial aspect of all mature relationships. The more destructive the subject in unconscious fantasy the more the object is objectively perceived and seen as separate and different as projections are destroyed. Here the ruthlessness involved in mature relationships is not the same as the baby's ruthlessness at the beginning, although it is akin and does have its roots in the early feeding situation. A baby whose mother survives the passionate hunger of her ruthless baby by not feeling too attacked by the baby's intense hunger and/or rage, will facilitate the establishment of her baby's developing surviving object.

But ruthlessness in maturity means that the individual is able to take responsibility for her own feelings and is able to distinguish between the Me and the Not-me world. The consequence is that the subject is able to say 'no' when she feels the pressure from the other to say 'yes'. This is the mark of integrity and the capacity to know one's Self. Many patients in analysis are more familiar with a non-surviving object that persecutes and causes an incommensurate sense of guilt. They feel obliged to protect the analyst from their conviction that relationships are dangerous and simultaneously they are sure they will damage the analyst with their need. If this need is seen they feel the analyst will surely retaliate or disappear; certainly not survive. The analytic relationship is an opportunity for the patient to go through all the aspects of a whole experience<sup>2</sup> of a real surviving object/analyst. In a letter to Bob Rodman in 1969 Winnicott wrote:

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<sup>1</sup> In Chapter 2 The Destiny Drive (pp. 26 -27) in *Forces of Destiny* (1989).

<sup>2</sup> I am referring to the stages of the analytic process, on a par with, but not the same as, infant development.

*'...everything boils down in the end to what I have tried to describe as the survival of the analyst, only it may take years for the patient to become sufficiently confident in the transference to be able to take the risk of a relationship in which the analyst is absolutely unprotected...The idea is there...that when the patient gets toward this very serious state of affairs then almost anything can happen and it is irrelevant. The only thing is arriving at the point at which the risk is taken and the analyst survives or does not survive.'* (Rodman 1989, p. 181)

Adolescence is the most complicated period of development because it is the time that the tasks of emotional separation become so literally explicit in the body as the child is physically becoming a man or woman and is destined to leave home. Hate and rejection are particularly normal features at this stage as the adolescent struggles with the anxieties related to destruction and murder. As Winnicott says, *'If in fantasy of early growth, there is contained death, then at adolescence there is contained murder.'* (Winnicott 1971, p.144). The parents and family need to survive and the more they survive the more necessarily they will be tested for their resilience. The adolescent's negotiation of her inner and outer worlds requires an external surviving object in the same way as was required by the new born infant.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to assert that I realise that what I have outlined above suggests a linear development of a surviving object going from birth to death. In as much as the baby grows into an adult and has to go through physical developmental stages, I do mean that there is indeed a linear aspect of emotional development. But what I wish to emphasise is that the sequence from object relating to object usage is a continuous dynamic process and gradually what builds up in the psyche are configurations that relate to each phase along a developmental line. These configurations and constellations are sets of object relationships which are dynamic, and their relationship to time and a linear development is complex because of the nature of repression and the unconscious. Although the study of the good enough facilitating environment can become a paradigm for the analytic setting, the analyst's task is to recognise the paradoxical predicament the patient in analysis finds himself. The patient will bring his infantile anxieties from the past but he will always be

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<sup>1</sup> The need for an external surviving object is crucial for the whole of childhood and life, but I think it could be said that the first two years and subsequently the period of adolescence, will be the most intense time for the subject to test the environment's capacity to survive.

the contemporary adult who is continuing to react, be and potentially grow. I believe that the best the analyst can offer is a new and different experience which may or may not, in time, help the patient to overcome the inhibitions and restrictions of an internal world where a non-surviving object dominates.

### *Summary*

I think that Winnicott's focus on the survival of the object from the very early stages of life – at the theoretical first feed – linked with the work of Freud – his metapsychology and the Oedipus complex – and reinforced by Anna Freud's work on the lines of development – suggests that the negotiation of each stage of development cannot be achieved without the process of internalising a surviving object. Therefore, without this good enough experience, that helps to develop the sense of self, the oedipus complex cannot be resolved, and the depressive position of Melanie Klein's cannot be negotiated other than through the creation of a false self. And as Winnicott would say, living through a false self is not a life that can be felt to have any meaning.

### **3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY & CRITICAL REVIEW OF MY DEVELOPMENT AS A RESEARCHER**

In this section I account for and critique my development as a researcher. First of all I briefly explore the meaning of the term 'research methodology', before I examine the process I engaged in as I prepared for the main book, *The Language of Winnicott*. This is followed by an explication of the meaning of a research paradigm and how it informed my learning process during my research.

#### **3a My development as researcher**

'Research' refers to the pursuit of information and at this ordinary level is an action most people have to do in every day life, but for a piece of academic work 'research' is generally acknowledged as referring to the 'pursuit of [scientific] knowledge'; or enquiry. Therefore 'applied research' in this context refers to the application of [researched] knowledge; for example through experiment, in order to test the hypothesis ie: gain evidence for the validity of the research, and the knowledge achieved by the research. Bullock et al describe 'methodology' as sometimes seen as a synonym for 'method' but that it has come to refer more specifically '*to the study and description of the methods and procedures of a given activity, as well as meaning the general investigation of the aims, concepts, and principles of reasoning of some discipline.*' (Bullock et al 1977) Nowadays, research methodology does not just apply to the sciences but spans the spectrum of humanities and other disciplines.

The following is a description of my methodology ie: my actions and procedures in writing the submitted works. As already stated, my idea for a comprehensive account of Winnicott's work came into being through my need for a work of reference to assist me with teaching the work of Winnicott. (see 1a) So my pursuit of information was 'the work of Winnicott', aimed at producing a guide to his work. To this end I was involved in an investigation of his texts in my effort to understand the meaning of his particular use of language.

By early 1993, when the synopsis for *The Language of Winnicott* was accepted and commissioned by Karnac Books, I had been working for the Squiggle Foundation for four

years and had participated in many courses and discussions, as well as presented my own lectures on Winnicott's work. In addition I had set up a Further Study Group for a small number of participants wishing to deepen their study beyond the introductory course. (see 1a) Throughout the following two years of preparing the manuscript,<sup>1</sup> I continued to teach Winnicott, (twice weekly each term), led workshops, and lectured to a variety of groups. This was alongside my work in private practice with adult patients working at an average of 35 clinical hours per week.<sup>2</sup> Teaching, alongside supervised clinical work<sup>3</sup> and discussion with colleagues, benefitted my research enormously. The complementary activities contributed to an important learning process. It was this learning process that underpinned my research.

My natural learning style has always involved a search for meaning based on my personal experience. Psychodynamic psychotherapy trainings require the student to be in therapy, study the psychoanalytic texts, see patients under supervision, and take part in clinical seminars where there is a shared discussion of case material. This is described as a deep learning approach (Wisker 2001) where the reflection of experience with the patient and one's self as patient, is core to the training of all psychodynamic practitioners. I have always had an enquiring mind and I think my personal learning style meant that I was drawn to this kind of training.

My first book, *Psychotherapy Trainings: a guide* (Abram 1992) was a self-directed research of the differences between humanistic and analytic therapies. This had come about because my first psychotherapy training was humanistic and the second psychoanalytic. My aims and objectives in writing the guide was fuelled by my need to understand what the differences between each discipline amounted to. The compilation of this volume gave me the opportunity to map the world of psychotherapy and to understand more about my own identity and in which direction I was interested in moving. I was engaged in further experiential learning as I interviewed the members of each training committee and learnt about their curriculum and the way they went about setting up training requirements. This was followed by a reflective practice as I listened to the tapes of the interviews and wrote

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<sup>1</sup> The final manuscript was submitted in July 1995. However, it took another year before the copy editing had been completed and it was published in the Autumn of 1996.

<sup>2</sup> This has always been an essential contribution to my understanding of Winnicott's work.

<sup>3</sup> Christopher Bollas supervised all my clinical cases between 1990 and 1993 on a once weekly basis.

my appraisals of each training organisation in order to guide the reader to the training that would suit their inclinations and beliefs.

So that as I began my research for the submitted works, I had my personal learning style that had been developing and deepening over the years and especially during my trainings in psychotherapy. I carried with me a set of beliefs and assumptions emerging out of my reflexive experience as a psychotherapist. Therefore, my natural learning style, consolidated by my psychotherapy trainings, shaped my assumptions in psychoanalytic theory so that I fitted in well to the tradition that had been structured at the Squiggle Foundation when I began working there.

My experience at Squiggle was another training of sorts, and because it was not formalised, there was a freer sense of sharing amongst colleagues, thoughts and reflections on the Winnicott texts in relation to clinical work. This atmosphere served me well in consolidating my second psychotherapy training. The format of the lecture series gave me ample opportunity to develop my skills at writing clinical papers, although I chose to exclude my own clinical examples in *The Language of Winnicott* for reasons of confidentiality. Nevertheless, it is true to say that it was my clinical experience of patients alongside my experience of analysis, that enabled me to appreciate the psychoanalytic depth as I explored Winnicott's texts. In other words it was my concrete experience ie: clinical work and the process of personal analysis, that shaped my reflective observation of my patients and self *in relation* to the texts/theory. This helped me to track Winnicott's 'abstract conceptualisations' and gather and organise them, resulting in the book. What were these abstract conceptualisations and what were they based on?

Wisker writes that when considering one's research it is useful to think about a 'research paradigm'. The latter carries the assumptions that lead the research. She goes on to underline the contrast between research based on positivist and postpositivist paradigms that focus on '*reliability and objectivity*'; and research that is based on '*constructivism and critical theory that use a relativist ontology, transactional epistemology, and hermeneutic, dialectical methodology.*' According to her the insights of critical theorists of Marxism and feminism state that, '*Their knowledge of the world (epistemology) is transactional (recognising that one set of actions causes other interactions and responses), and the methodology is dialectical and dialogic, recognising that as different readings and*



*arguments are presented and set up against each other, knowledge and versions of the world move on through this interaction and dialogue, producing different understandings and expressions.*' (Wisker 2001, pp. 123-4)

Although, as I have shown, Freud's approach made use of the positivist philosophies of his day, it is this latter 'research paradigm' – the dialectical and dialogic - that seems to be much more of an apt description of the way in which the practice of psychoanalysis has developed in the last fifty years. This is because its focus is directed towards what Wisker describes as 'interpretative', ie: the research paradigm for psychoanalysis is founded on the tenets of psychoanalysis as set out by Freud (underlying assumptions) that interpret meaning through the study of relating things (interpreting events and relations – the interaction in the consulting room). 'Dialogic' means the conduct of a debate between different interpretations. (Wisker 2001, p. 124.) In reference to this model I think the research paradigm that leads my research is based on a dialectical and dialogic methodology. Within this research paradigm are the basic tenets of Freud's paradigm for psychoanalysis integrated with Winnicott's extensions culminating in his theoretical matrix. (see 2b) So whilst this could be seen as the research paradigm that drives the research, how can I then think about my learning process?

A useful model to reflect on experiential learning is described by Kolb who defines it as *'the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience'*. He created a diagram to illustrate a *'continuous learning'* pattern that involves a circle going from *'active experimentation'* to *'concrete experience'* to *'reflective observation'* to *'abstract conceptualisation'*. (Wisker 2001, p. 96)

In the first clinical paper I was led by a countertransference reaction that took place in the consulting room in work with a patient who was undergoing psychoanalytic psychotherapy. It was the 'concrete experience' that initiated my exploration of the meaning of this countertransference reaction. As I explored in my writing what had happened in relation to the theories of Winnicott that I felt most drawn to (my process of reflective observation), so I was led to Winnicott's concept of the use of the object which, in turn, led on to my own abstract conceptualising of 'the surviving object'.

The Kolb cycle has been repeated during the course of this PhD by published work - in the writing of the context statement and the new clinical paper. (Abram 2004) Through the process of having to account for and critique my publications I have had to be engaged in further reflective observation of myself and my actions. I have come to see that whilst I think that the notion of the 'surviving object' is alluded to in Winnicott's work, the formulation is being articulated by me. Because of having to develop my original thinking for this statement and the revisions, I have developed further the idea of a surviving object as a concept, the articulation of which constitutes an extension of Winnicott's work through my interpretation of his texts. This is as a result of my accumulated study of Winnicott's thought and my continued development during my recent further training to become a psychoanalyst, alongside the process of undertaking this PhD by published works.

The psychoanalytic training in London requires an even more in depth process than my second psychotherapy training. The frame of a 5x weekly analysis offers the opportunity of a more indepth process in order to reach aspects of the patient's repressions through understanding one's own. The clinical paper I wrote for a conference in Autumn 2003, illustrates a qualitative difference in comparison to my paper of 1996, and also demonstrates my reflections and explorations of both Winnicott's and Green's theories, applied to my clinical findings. Moreover, I am able to clarify further, how I am continuing to think and work on the idea of a 'surviving object', whilst recognising that it can stand in need of many developments and applications in the foreseeable future. (see **3b & c**)

The process of writing this context statement has helped me to contextualise Winnicott's work and critique my contribution to the analytic community in terms of my organisation of Winnicott's work as well as my papers that illustrate ways of making use of his theories. As a consequence of the process of taking the PhD by published works, I am more able to understand and appreciate not only Winnicott's contribution to the extension of psychoanalytic theory but also to recognise that my work has created a contribution for future researchers' understanding of Winnicott's epistemology.

When I began writing the submitted works in the early 1990s my objects of research were my patients, my self and the psychoanalytic texts. In writing *The Language of Winnicott* and editing the André Green texts I was using a methodology akin to literature review.

When writing the clinical papers, although the precludes use the methodology of literature review in my presentation of theory, the clinical illustrations demonstrate an action research in my role as a 'reflective' professional practitioner.

Taking the above into account suggests that the research methodologies I have been using, based on my natural learning style and my subsequent developments, are a combination of overlapping methodologies including literature review - in my examination of the texts; health practice - in my clinical work in the consulting room; history - in relating Winnicott's developments of his concepts over the forty years; philosophy and the social sciences - based on the paradigms of hermeneutics, interpretivism and positivism.

### *Summary*

In this section I have attempted to formulate my approach to my research. My beginning was motivated by a drive to create a work of reference for myself to aid my teaching of Winnicott. This began in about 1992, and twelve years later I can now see that implicit in my aim, which has now been articulated through the reflexive process I have been engaged with in writing this context statement, was the question in my title for this context statement – does Winnicott's work constitute a paradigm shift in psychoanalysis? Had I begun my research in order to write a PhD I would have had to think through which were the most appropriate research methodologies for my task. In other words it is the question and my assumptions that come first and it is these that underpin the research and inform the type of research methodologies. In this statement it is my retrospective exploration of my research methodologies that has uncovered my interpretive approach. The latter came first.

In my first book my self directed research was aimed at the comparison of different models in psychotherapy trainings and how this assisted me in forming my own identity and path. This meant that by the time I began my research for the submitted works I carried a set of beliefs and assumptions. However, the assumptions I take with me into the consulting room in my clinical work with patients are distinct from the assumptions I have whilst undertaking my research – though, of course they are inter-related – and both sets of assumptions inform my approaches in the consulting room and my research.

I have illustrated how I make use of both Freud's and Winnicott's paradigms in my clinical work and my two papers provide evidence of this. (Abram 1998; 2004) In writing for the main book I aimed to present the themes so as to facilitate thinking and discourse and although I aimed very much at the heuristic process at the same time I was inevitably forming my own interpretations of the text emerging out of my personal experience with analysts, teachers, supervisors and colleagues. This is why I think I was carrying a research paradigm involving an interpretative perspective that was more hermeneutical, in as much as *The Language of Winnicott* could be said to be a production of reconstructed Winnicottian arguments. As already stated, the aim was to present Winnicott's work for the reader to explore meanings and understanding in their own way; so that the reader, in turn, could come to their own version of Winnicott and psychoanalysis. In Winnicott's theory, the personally formulated argument is the only authentic version of any given theory. The culture at the Squiggle Foundation aimed at 'cultivating' Winnicott's conceptualisations in vivo.

However, *The Language of Winnicott*, therefore, inevitably represents my own interpretive epistemology (Blaikie 1993), based on my own assumptions, in the context of Winnicott's work and psychoanalysis, and complemented by my clinical papers and editorial work. And like all epistemologies it has its limitations.

### **3b Limitations of the research**

Academic resources for the research in 1993 were limited to the following:

1. The published works of Winnicott.
2. Harry Karmac's bibliography which had just been completed.
3. Secondary source books and papers.<sup>1</sup>

The title was modelled on Laplanche and Pontalis' *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, but at the beginning I was unsure as to how the project would take shape since I had also thought about making use of Rycroft's dictionary model. The first task was to create a list of words and phrases that were continually cropping up in Winnicott's texts. This list grew

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<sup>1</sup>Particularly useful were *Boundary and Space* by Madeleine Davis (1981) and *Winnicott* by Adam Phillips (1988)

to about 140, and as I began work on defining each word, I was taken to different papers, (addressed to a variety of audiences) spanning most of Winnicott's working life. This became an exercise of tracing the evolution of Winnicott's thinking and his creation of a new development in psychoanalytic theory. The tracking that I became involved in, paralleled the way in which I was teaching, and so I found myself writing as I taught, guiding the reader to the texts, accompanied by explanatory notes – a method that would be described as heuristic – in the tradition of the Winnicottian notion of a good enough mother who offers a facilitating environment

This immersion in Winnicott's work arose out of a wish to present, in as much as it is possible, a panoramic view of Winnicott's oeuvre. Fundamentally, my idea was to guide the reader through the texts, to facilitate further understanding and to offer different ways of journeying through the texts. I think this is what makes *The Language of Winnicott* an unusual volume and this has its value. However, I also recognise that this approach excludes the contextualising of Winnicott's theories. This could have been addressed in at least two ways. Firstly, by referring to the context from which and in which Winnicott's work emerged; and secondly, by referring to and scanning the secondary literature more extensively. The following are my comments on these points.

For the revisions of this context statement I have chosen to contextualise Winnicott's work through a presentation of Freud's work as a Kuhnian scientific revolution. This introduces the first limit: that of seeing Freud's work as having the structure of a science. By adopting the constructs of Freud's work by Sandler et al (as well as Laplanche & Pontalis and Strachey) I created a further limitation, because there are other versions and ways of accounting for the evolution of psychoanalysis as an intellectual and medical revolution. Furthermore, although I refer to the importance of Melanie Klein's influence on Winnicott's work, an appraisal of her contribution would serve to highlight the differences between their approaches. The question of paradigm shift comes into play here – if a paradigm shift can be perceived in Winnicott's work how does it manifest itself in Klein's work and how do they differ?

There is also the question of the history of psychoanalysis. For example how much did Ferenczi's work influence Winnicott? Certainly the Budapest school worked on notions of

cure related to maternal nourishment. Could Winnicott's work be seen in relation to Ferenczi's approach to the analysand and the notion of regression? And there are the teachers, supervisors and analysts of Winnicott all of whom contributed in significant ways to the development of psychoanalysis as a theory and an international organisation in the twentieth century. For example analysts such as Ernest Jones who founded the Institute of Psychoanalysis and referred Winnicott to his first analyst James Strachey. According to biographical information Winnicott's favourite teachers when a student at the Institute were Rickman and Glover. Winnicott chose Joan Riviere for his second analyst, whilst he was being supervised by Melanie Klein. And what about his contemporaries like Anna Freud, Balint, Bowlby, Fairbairn, and a little later, Bion. There are many more analysts who could be named. The correlation of his ideas with others would enhance and deepen an appreciation of Winnicott's originality.

For the past forty years there have been many papers and publications on Winnicott's work. My choice of the secondary literature left out many commentators on certain aspects of Winnicott's work some of which could have been usefully explored as a way of comparing the different interpretations of Winnicott's work; particularly the developments in attachment theories by psychoanalysts like Peter Fonagy and Daniel Stern.

My notion of the surviving object would be strengthened through correlation with Freud's theory of sexual development, Anna Freud's work on developmental lines and the recent work of the clinicians working at the Anna Freud Centre as demonstrated in *Psychoanalysis and Developmental Therapy* (Hurry 1998) where the notion of a developmental object, amongst other developmental themes, is explored from different perspectives.

These limitations establish the boundaries of my work. Within these boundaries there is development around its organising theme – that of the surviving object and its place in conceptualising the paradigm shift introduced into Freud's work by Winnicott.

### **3c Consequences of the research**

Since the publication of the submitted works, I became interested in the idea of enlarging on the comprehensive presentation of Winnicott's work. As described in the first part of

this statement, the way in which Winnicott's publications are produced does not demonstrate the significance of his oeuvre. The project to compile a standardised edition of Winnicott's writings has been developing as an idea first suggested by Christopher Bollas in the late 1980s.

In 2000 I prepared a sketch synopsis for *The Complete Works of D.W. Winnicott* and subsequently The Winnicott Trust have funded me to prepare a detailed synopsis which I completed in the Autumn of 2001. Since then I have refined and developed it and the final version of the synopsis was completed in November 2002. The intention is to republish all the published work in chronological order, with detailed editorial notes for each paper. Presently this amounts to eleven volumes.

The preparation for the above synopsis continues to influence my development as a researcher and recently I have discovered that there is an unknown amount of unpublished writing of Winnicott's. As General Editor of the Complete Works I am currently involved in ascertaining how much of Winnicott's work is unpublished. To this end I was made Honorary Archivist for The Winnicott Trust in May 2002. Since the Summer of 2003 I have been working with the Archivist of the Institute of Psycho-Analysis on 10 boxes of Winnicott's writings that have never been properly catalogued. Recently, in my capacity as Honorary Archivist, I have acquired a further 10 boxes or more, of Winnicott's writings that it would appear have not been looked at since Clare Winnicott's death in 1988. These 20 boxes, once properly catalogued, will be an invaluable asset for all researchers of Winnicott's work.

At this present time the bulk of Winnicott's unpublished papers is housed at The Archives of Psychiatry, The New York Hospital-Medical Center, New York. There is more in the possession of several researchers and colleagues of Winnicott's. So there is a great deal of research work to do in tracking down, gathering and subsequently cataloguing the writings. This will all be part and parcel of the work towards the creation of a Complete Works.

Meanwhile, the project of compiling the *Complete Works of D.W. Winnicott* is officially sponsored by The Winnicott Trust and since March 2002 is affiliated to the University of Cambridge with Professor John Forrester in the Department of History and Philosophy of

Science where I am currently an Affiliated Research Scholar. There is an International Editorial Advisory Panel made up of distinguished psychoanalysts who are known for their original contributions to the development of Winnicott's theories. A CD carrying all the publications of Winnicott has already been prepared with a database software specifically designed to access the volumes. At present, negotiations are underway with Routledge (US and UK) to publish the Complete Works.

As already mentioned *The Language of Winnicott* has now been translated into several languages. (see 1c) In the Autumn of 2003, to celebrate the launch of the French translation, I was invited to present a paper for Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherches Psychanalytiques pour le developpement de l'enfant et du Nourrisson (GERPEN) in Paris. The paper 'L'objet qui survit' explores my notion of a surviving object with extensive case material of a patient I have been working with in intensive analysis over a period of eight years. In this paper I present 'scenes' as they have emerged during the course of analysis and explore how these symbolic events in the patient's development relate to her internal oedipal constructions. In the discussion of that paper I make use of Green's 'dead mother complex' and his concept of 'actualised projection' to understand the symbolic events of the analysis. This paper is an example of my further development since the submitted works and my clinical paper of 1996. This paper is being published in the GERPEN bulletin and is presently being considered to be published in 'La Journal de Psychanalyse de l'Enfant', where Didier Houzel (one of the founder members of GERPEN) is the Chief Editor.

Further outcomes of my work include: teaching the work of Winnicott for candidates following the training in psychoanalysis at the Institute of Psycho-Analysis; lecturing at the Tavistock Clinic; teaching for the Centre for the Advancement of Psychoanalytic Studies; commissioned to write an educational paper on Winnicott's work for the International Journal of Psychoanalysis; and editing a collection of contemporary papers on Winnicott's contribution for the New Library of Psychoanalysis.

The above projects involve me in an ongoing research on Winnicott's work and the important process of correlation. This provides me with an unprecedented opportunity to continue the development of my work on Winnicott which in turn instigates my own ideas and ways of conceptualising.



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## **APPENDIX 1**

**Squiggles, clowns and Catherine wheels: violation of the self  
and its vicissitudes**

in

**Natureza Humana**

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## Squiggles, Clowns and Catherine Wheels: Violation of the Self and Its Vicissitudes

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**Resumo:** O artigo desenvolve uma reflexão sobre o conceito winnicottiano de núcleo isolado do si-mesmo, ao qual se atribui o caráter de ser permanentemente desconhecido e incomunicável. O tema é discutido a partir de um outro conceito do mesmo autor, o de cisão da personalidade em verdadeiro e falso si-mesmo, com a ajuda de textos de Marion Milner em que esta questiona Winnicott acerca do isolamento e incomunicabilidade. Na sequência, é examinada a importância terapêutica do "objeto que sobrevive". Sobre este último tema, é oferecida uma ilustração clínica.

**Palavras-chave:** Winnicott, si-mesmo, incomunicabilidade, isolamento, objeto que sobrevive.

**Abstract:** The article develops a reflection on Winnicott's concept of isolated self, to which the character of being permanently unknown and incommunicable is attributed. This topic is further discussed with the help of another concept of the same author, that of scission into the true and the false self, and also of some texts by Marion Milner, in which Winnicott's ideas of isolation and incommunicability are questioned. In the sequence, the therapeutic significance of the "object which survives" is examined. To that end, a clinical example is presented and analyzed.

**Key-words:** Winnicott, self, incommunicability, isolation, surviving object.

*When I look I am seen, so I exist.  
I can now afford to look and see.  
I now look creatively and what I apperceive I also perceive.  
In fact I take care not to see what is not there to be seen  
(unless I am tired). (Winnicott)*

Even his name Winni-cott conjures up Christopher Robin's favorite transitional object and every baby's first holding environment outside of someone's arms.

We have heard from those that knew him well that he was the quintessential mischievous clown of psychoanalysis, loved (and hated) for his serious fooling around. Although as a man and a writer he may make us smile and laugh, there is really nothing comical about his thought – he is able to take us straight to the heart of human subjectivity.

At a memorial meeting, in 1972, a year after he had died, Marion Milner shared her memories of him by describing some of the images that were reminiscent of her friend and colleague Donald. 1957, somewhere in France, the little clown she saw in a small town square, who appeared not to be able to do what the other acrobats were doing as he jumped up to the trapeze bar, and then suddenly when he finally did reach the bar, he whirled himself round faster than any one else – delighting and thrilling the crowd – like a Catherine Wheel – another of Marion's images – it was the dark centre of the spinning firework that reminded her of Winnicott's writings on the unknowable core self.

One of the images I particularly enjoy of Marion's is a cartoon from the New Yorker. She showed this to Winnicott during the war, and it was a joke they shared for years after.

For me it depicts an Alice-in-Wonderland sense of humour where non-sense is celebrated and enjoyed, and for Marion Milner it resonated with her "dominant preoccupation" on the threshold of consciousness, the surface of the water as the place of submergence or



emergence. You'll all have your own associations – I can see many more of Winnicott's themes – the notions of play – transitional space, the unconscious, aggression, and of course communication and relationship – the sharing of an experience – why did it feel like Tuesday and not Wednesday? and why might the other hippo understand?

Good clowns, like good jokes, strike home, taking us to the essence something *inside* us that is felt but may not be yet thought – like great poets, writers and artists. And it has recently been said of Winnicott (A. Green) that his “was the next greatest mind in psychoanalysis, after Freud”.

My presentation today is a reflection on Winnicott's concept of the self where I pay particular attention to the incommunicado self in relation to Marion Milner's comments from her 1972 paper, “Winnicott and the Two Way Journey”. This will be followed by a clinical illustration:

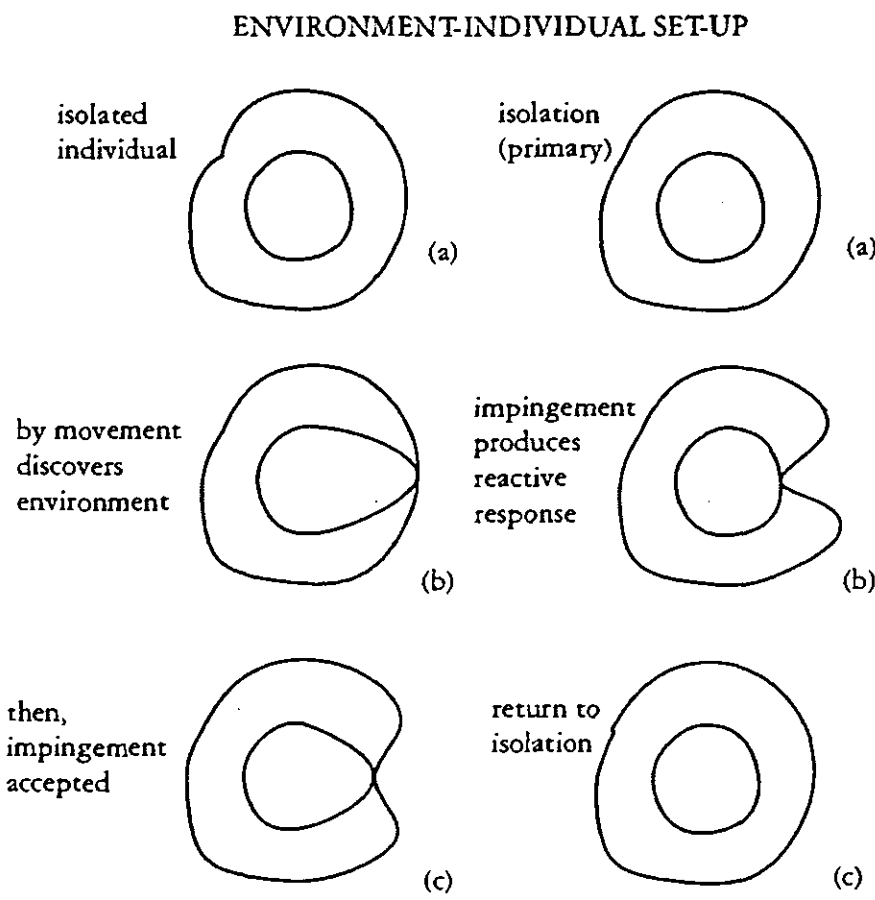


I keep thinking it's Tuesday

## The self

I hardly need remind you of Winnicott's sudden realization, in the middle of a scientific meeting in 1942, that “there was no such thing as a baby”, and when he wrote about this, in 1952, in “Anxiety Associated With Insecurity” (Winnicott 1958, p. 97), he named the earliest mother-infant relationship the “environment-individual set-up” and said that “the centre of gravity of the being does not start off in the individual, [...] but — in the total set up”! (1958, p. 99).

In the same year, 1952, he wrote, "Psychoses and Child Care" (1958, p. 219) (which was based on a lecture given to the Psychiatry Section of the Royal Society of Medicine), and it contains several diagrams. I have extracted two of these for my purpose here.



Here on the left hand side you will see the healthy pattern of relationship.

On the right hand side we see an illustration of the pathological pattern of relationship – Winnicott says of the third position on the right hand side that “The sense of self is lost in this situation and is only regained by a return to isolation”.

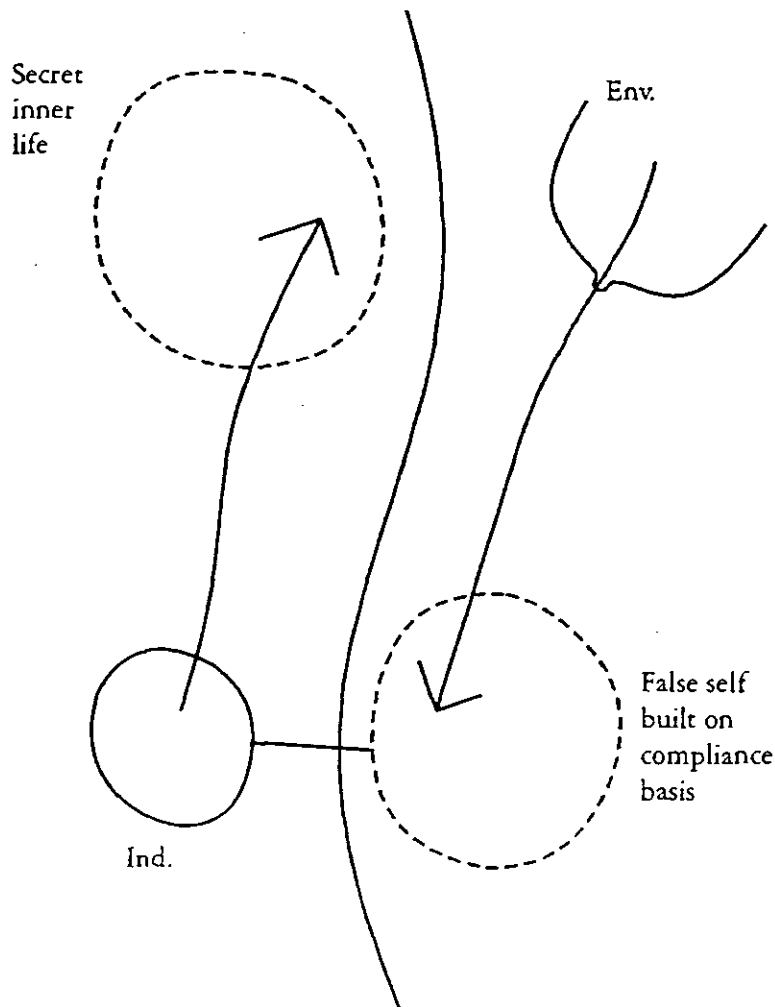
These illustrations serve to convey Winnicott’s main point which is that the pattern of relationship is set up very early on and is contingent on the match between both the environment and the infant.

In his latter years he categorized two types of babies – those that have been held and those who have not been held.

These diagrams also demonstrate the two types of impingement – in one the *impingement is accepted* – this is the baby who is being held – in other words the infant was ready for an experience – whereas in the other pattern, the infant is not ready and therefore has to react to the impingement – you'll remember that what breaks the continuity-of-being in the individual is the infant's *reaction to impingement* and it is this reaction that distorts development.

So here we see the beginnings of the sense of self – the shell being the environment/mother and the kernel being the baby.

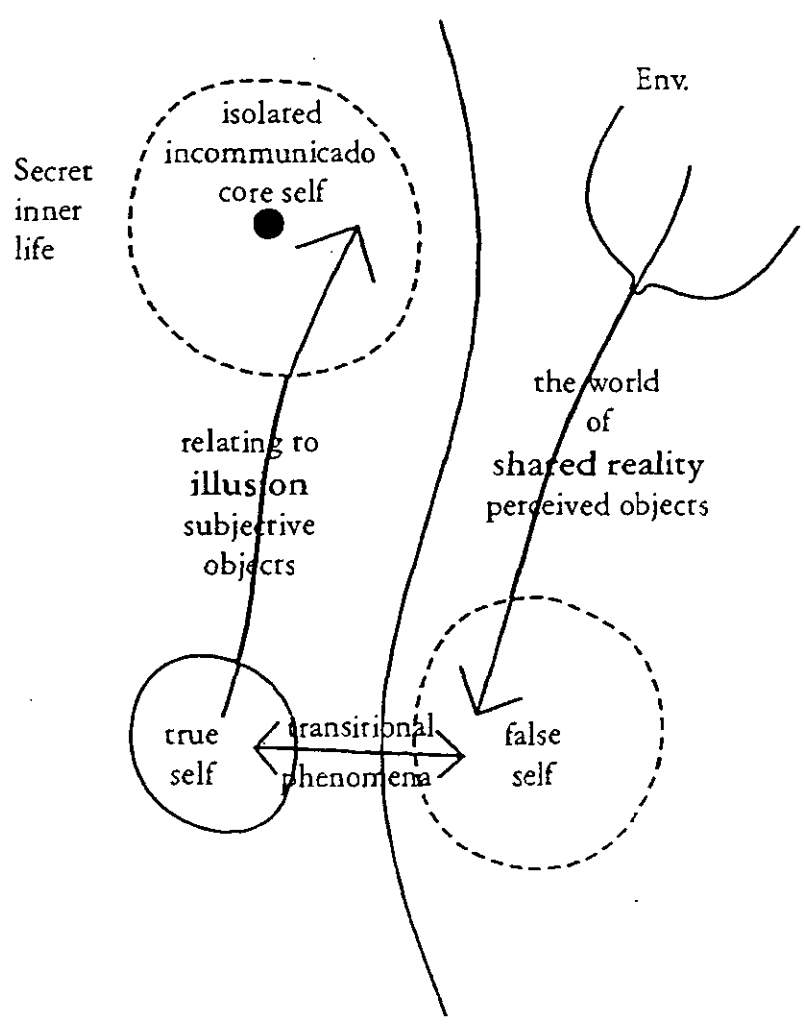
#### BASIC SPLIT IN PERSONALITY



From the same paper of 1952, Winnicott's thinking on the isolate core self can be seen. Here we see an example of what could be described as a divided self (Laing published his book *The Divided Self* in 1960, and I understand he was supervised by Winnicott) but here he refers to it as the Basic Split in the Personality, and in 1952 it is pathological and the result of a failing environment. He says of this diagram:

I try to show how a tendency for a basic split in the environment individual set-up can start through failure of active adaptation on the part of the environment at the beginning. In the extreme case of splitting the secret inner life has very little in it derived from external reality. It is truly incommunicable.

BASIC SPLIT IN PERSONALITY



The next slide is my elaboration and interpretation of Winnicott's subsequent thinking of the late 1950s and early 1960s, which gathers together, in particular, the two concepts of the true self in relation to the false self in 1960, and the incommunicado, core self of 1963.

Let me explain – in 1960, Winnicott writes “Ego Distortion in Terms of True and False Self”. In this paper he outlines five different classifications of the false self across a spectrum spanning from the pathological to the healthy. The false self is set up in the individual to protect the true self. At the pathological end there is a total split – the false self is not connected to the true self – but at the healthy end the false self is a necessary boundary between the outside world and the inside. We could call this a healthy split, because it protects rather than dissociates. There is a link here with his 1963 paper, “Communicating and not Communicating Leading to a Study of Certain Opposites”, because it is in this paper that Winnicott takes the model of the pathological basic split in the individual (whose pattern of relationship is distorted), and states the corollary:

(...) in health there is a core to the personality that corresponds to the true self of the split personality; this core never communicates with the world of perceived objects, and [that] the individual person knows that it must never be communicated with or be influenced by external reality. (1965, p. 187)

This is, he says, his main point which “is at the centre of an intellectual world and of my paper”. Although healthy persons communicate and enjoy communicating, the other fact is equally true, that each individual is “*an isolate, permanently non-communicating, permanently unknown, in fact unfound.*”<sup>1</sup> (idem)

For Winnicott it is the failure of the environment in the earliest stages of life and the subsequent accumulation of painful, traumatic experiences that will lead to the individual organizing primitive defenses *in order* to protect the “isolated core”. And to emphasize his point, that the violation is psychological more than physical, he writes that, “Rape, and being eaten by cannibals are mere bagatelles as compared with the violation of the self’s core [...]” (idem) – he poses the question “how to be isolated without having to be insulated?”

So this diagram illustrates the ~~healthy~~ corollary of the pathological basic split. Now what about this isolated incommunicado self? Why must it never be communicated with? and why must it always be in Winnicott’s words “permanently isolated”. Marion Milner in her paper – “Winnicott and the Two Way Journey” – seems to differ from Winnicott’s viewpoint and I’m inviting you to ponder on Marion’s comments.

First of all lets think about withdrawal in its healthy and its pathological form. In health the withdrawal from life and relating is a resting place – a place to “be” and “feel real” (something that dominated Winnicott’s thought in his last decade of work as demonstrated in *Playing and Reality*), (based on unintegration, during the holding phase when in health the mother is in a state of primary maternal preoccupation, which in Winnicott’s words is the precursor to enjoyment – a word I shall be coming back to.)

The pathological withdrawal, however, is one that is based on the experience of gross impingements from the environment where the baby, who is not being held, is forced to react – interrupting the continuity-of-being – so that the place that should be for rest becomes a place of retreat from persecutions.

The violation of the self, according to Winnicott, is “communication seeping through to the inner core” of the self – and in 1960 (in “The Theory of the Parent Infant Relationship”) (1965, p. 37) Winnicott states that the impingements that are not met by the infant

will get through to “the central core of the ego” and this he adds “is the very nature of psychotic anxiety”. So it would appear that the core self, which must be incommunicado, is in fact itself made up from accumulated memories of violation. And that reminds me of Marion Milner’s image of the Catherine Wheel – because I can’t help but be reminded that this fire work is named after St. Catherine who was tortured and died on the wheel.

I think Marion Milner’s comments on Winnicott’s incommunicable core self sheds some light:

(...) I can understand him when he claims that the sense of self comes on *the basis of the* unintegrated state, but when he adds that this state is by definition not observable or communicable, I begin to wonder... I *think of the dark* still centre of the whirling Catherine Wheel and feel fairly certain that it can, in the right setting, be related to by the conscious ego discovering that it can turn in upon itself, make contact with the core of its own being, and find there a renewal, a rebirth. In fact isn’t Winnicott himself referring to this when he speaks of quietude linked with stillness?

Milner follows this by stating that the discovery of the self is inevitably linked with the discovery of one’s own body and she poses the question:

What is the relation of the sense of being, [which Winnicott says must precede the finding of the self], to the awareness of one’s own body? Marion Milner is reminding us that Winnicott, after Freud, refers to the body ego as the first self.

Turning to the two clinical examples (of the paper of 1963, p. 187), that Winnicott uses to illustrate what he means by violation of the self, in both cases he describes how his female patients used the writing of diaries and poetry to “establish a private self.”

But it seems to me that what Winnicott does not state, but I think is implicit in the material, is that his female patients are also telling him something about the way in which they were developing an inner private self in relation to what was happening to their bodies during the pre-pubescent and adolescent phases.

*So it seems to me* that the psychological violation that Winnicott wishes to *emphasize* (rape is mere bagatelle by comparison) cannot, as Milner points out, be separated from the outside – the body. Much more could be unpacked from these clinical examples in terms of gender, sexuality and oedipal issues – and the other well known paradox from that paper – “it is joy to be hidden and disaster not to be found”.

### The surviving object

I now want to move on to 1968 and what I believe to be, not necessarily the greatest of his papers, but certainly the greatest of his theories, “The Use of an Object and Relating Through Identifications”. (Winnicott 1971, p. 86)

In a nut shell, Winnicott’s thesis in this paper and in the whole of his work, is that there can be no true self living, no creative living, no sense of feeling real, without the subject’s experience of the destruction of the object and, absolutely crucial, *the object’s survival of the subject’s destruction*. Another way of putting this is that the failing environment is one in which the object has not and is not surviving – whereas a facilitating and holding environment is one in which the object is surviving. In the former it is the subject’s experience of a non-surviving object that *violates* the core self.



The fortunate subject, born into a facilitating environment is enabled, through the surviving object, to feel real, to discover the sense of self in relation to the body and outside world and, (this is also crucial), to *enjoy* life – for it is only through the enjoyment of life and relationships that the individual can be enriched and continue to develop and grow. Here is Winnicott in 1968.

There is no anger in the destruction of the object to which I am referring, though there could be said to be joy at the object's survival. (1968, p. 93). In 1989, Christopher Bollas, in *The Forces of Destiny*, (using a term from the work of Lacan), described "jouissance" as the "ego's inalienable right to ecstasy".

Winnicott stresses the value of the experience of joy at the object's survival:

[...] the object is *in fantasy* always being destroyed. This quality of 'always being destroyed' makes the reality of the surviving object felt as such, strengthens the feeling tone, and contributes to object constancy. The object can now be used. (1968, p. 90)

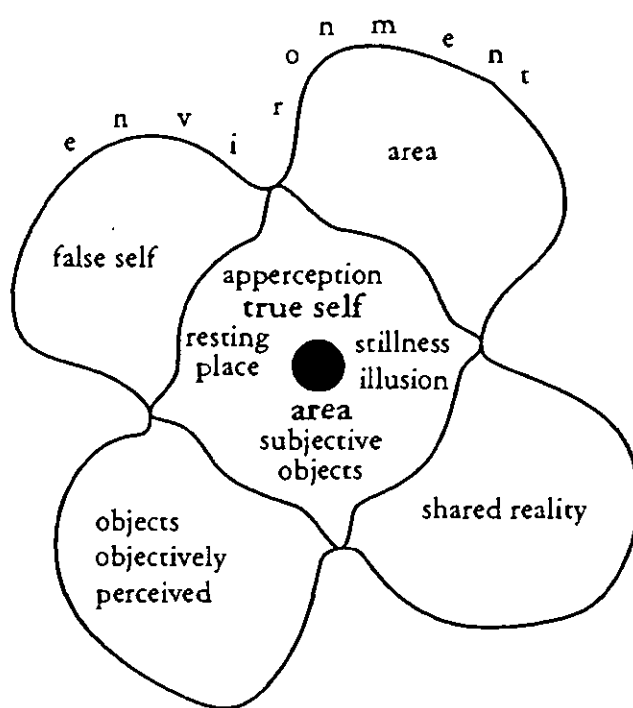
I think that all of us, (whether we come from a good-enough or not good enough environment), know something of the experience of a non-surviving object – therefore we all know, in an infinite variety of ways, something of the experience of violation of the self and its vicissitudes.

It follows, therefore, that, because violation of the self is as a result of a nonsurviving object, the patient seeking analysis is motivated by an unconscious search for an object that will survive. It may be that at the root of all creative endeavor is the search for the surviving object which in turn brings jouissance and enables the subject to "feel real" and to "live creatively".

I suggest, that if we take all the central psychoanalytic concepts along with any number of clinical papers, there lies the notion of the surviving object – for example Freud's Oedipus and Winnicott's Hamlet illustrate what disasters occur to the sense of self as a consequence of a non-surviving object.

Thus the technique of the psychoanalytic environment is the setting where the subject may find an object that will survive.

### INTER-RELATED SELF



enrichment through relationship

The last slide, based on Winnicott's primary diagrams of the healthy impingement, I attempt to illustrate the integrated self who can distinguish between Me and Not-me, can meet the impingements of every day life in relationships and who continues to develop, evolve and flower.

So, to date, this is as far as I have come and you will see that at the moment, I am wondering if Winnicott's incommunicado self exists in all of us as a result of violation, and that therefore it is a violated self and potentially psychotic – however, I tend to veer towards Marion's viewpoint that (like the unconscious) surely “in the right setting, it may be related to by the conscious ego discovering that it can turn in upon itself, make contact with the core of its own being, and find there a renewal, a rebirth?”

And in the following clinical example I hope to illustrate how a study of Winnicott's theme along with the thought of Marion Milner, helped me to reflect on a turning point, during the course of a psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

### Clinical example

Changes come in an analysis when the traumatic factors enter the psychoanalytic material in the patient's own way and within the patient's omnipotence. The interpretations that are alterative are those that can be made in terms of projection. (“Theory of the Parent-Infant Relationship”, Winnicott 1960b, p. 37)

Faith is the second child and only daughter of parents who lived in a liberal democracy but who belonged to a fundamentalist political sect whose philosophy was totalitarian. Their political beliefs and membership of this sect rationalized their need to lead an extremely controlled family life which was completely predictable, down to which meal they would eat on a given day of the week. The children were assigned quite specific roles which included the way in which they were named.

Faith says she always seemed to know that her assigned role in the family was to be the perfect compliant daughter – even as a tiny baby she was “so good”, according to her mother, and as a little girl she remembers being as good as she *possibly* could be with the hope that she would be noticed. And people did notice for a while, but Faith never felt it was enough, because, in reality, her good behaviour meant that she was mostly ignored. Therefore if any of her thoughts were bad, contradicting the general consensus of the family, being ignored, exacerbated her feeling that she was bad.

According to Faith it was her mother who dominated the family – her father was quiet and withdrawn, also compliant – disagreement and anger was an emotion that was never openly expressed. Faith had one memory of disagreeing with her mother when at 13 she protested that she was surely old enough to go to the shops alone. Her mother sulked, as if mortally wounded, and didn’t speak to her for the rest of the day.

In contrast to this, Faith had only one memory of warmth from her mother – when she was in her 8th year she remembers her mother kissing her on the cheek. She remembers giggling and running away embarrassed and she remembers the intense feeling of goodness it evoked. Momentarily, in a condensed split second did she have the feeling of being special and noticed by her mother – of being loved.

Throughout the years of therapy I came to learn of Faith’s version of her well-meaning parents – a controlling, cold mother and a remote, depressed father afraid of his own emotions and with a hidden, secret past.

Faith’s story seemed plausible because her compliance and the anti-life atmosphere of the family was apparent in the transference. I was very struck how still she was on the couch and at first, I couldn’t work out whether she didn’t dare move or simply could not move. The atmosphere of the sessions were as if we were in a very sacred place

where we had to be very still and very quiet. I found myself, at first, fearing to move too much, talk too much or even feel too much.

When Faith came into therapy she said she needed some help with the thinking that she'd had to do on her own all her life. It seemed that she knew at a deep level that she was not really living her life. The thinking she talked about in the first session, I believe was linked with, among other things, her profound depression at having to stay so hidden (disaster not to be found) and a profound sense of guilt because she did not believe in her parents staunch political beliefs and could not accept from a very young age the fundamentalist teachings of this particular sect. The help she knew she needed was to live her life so as to set herself free from the stifling atmosphere of her childhood.

At some deep level she had found herself (she knew she disagreed so knew she was different) but had not yet found a way of being herself and declaring her self to the world – to be seen (that is to know that it was more than all right for her to disagree.) For instance on the very rare occasions her parents visited she would hide anything in her flat that she felt they would not approve of. This would require quite an upheaval and several hours of going through her flat with a fine tooth comb. She had long thought and accepted that this was normal.

This also occurred in therapy where her habit was to always arrive 5 minutes before time. Once when she arrived late, because of traffic, she felt flustered and afraid because she had not prepared herself. We worked on the meaning of this and understood it as her fear of being found or/and finding herself. The 5 minute preparation time was required so that she could tidy things away that *she thought I may* not approve of – and thus all the bad things could not be discovered either.

And thus, in the transference, I alternated between her mother and the political leader of their sect; controlling, judgmental, authoritarian and stern. The atmosphere of the sessions were not dead exactly, but also not alive, and, although there were some important

changes occurring in her life, I wondered at times, if Faith would ever be able to break free of her past and feel she had the right to experience “jouissance” – “a virtually legal imperative to pursue desire” – linking with what Winnicott once referred to as “ego orgasm” and Bollas has developed in his “destiny drive” (Bollas 1989) or was she going to live a life of deathly compliance, never daring to declare to herself what she desired.

About four years into the therapy, I started to find the sessions more and more difficult to tolerate in relation to my concentration. I had the most overpowering experience of not being able to listen. It was not as if I had never experienced this before with other patients but in those cases it would last momentarily and was always limited. But with Faith for a period of several months it dominated the sessions. She would arrive, go to the couch and I would start to listen and then discover time had gone by and I had not heard anything and I would not know what she was talking about. On realizing that I had not heard I would then make a concerted effort and for a while could hear the *content* of the first few sentences, but then the same thing would happen.

The peculiar aspect of my reaction was that I did not really go into my own reverie whilst not being able to hear – it really felt as if I was disabled, almost as if I had become deaf – I had an image of an insulated glass wall in the middle of the consulting room – preventing communication. In other words my desire to listen had not disappeared, in fact I struggled painfully at each session and it gradually became clear that my inability, this sort of deafness, was a symptom occurring in the countertransference. It would appear that I had become the mother who was not able to listen nor see her daughter – but more than this – wasn't my incapacity, my deafness, the projection of Faith's self-object, in fact the core self object? The accumulated memories of painful violation at the very core of the Catherine Wheel, where in a quasi-autistic-like state I could not respond because I was so insulated – the deafness made me incommunicado.

At this point in the therapy, however, I did not know what this situation was replicating in Faith's past. In addition, it seemed to me that she did not notice that I had a problem with listening to her, she seemed to be carrying on as if I was listening. I gradually came to the realization that Faith did not expect me to listen, nor did she expect me to notice her. In fact it gradually dawned on me that although she was arriving and departing she was hoping that I would not notice her.

But there was something paradoxical occurring – I was receiving double messages. On the one hand I could not hear her and hardly noticed her and at the same time I came to notice, through my countertransference reaction, that she did not want to be noticed, and at the same time needed me to notice that she could not bear to be seen.

"It is joy to be hidden but disaster not to be found." Remember playing hide *and seek*? Somehow there is a length of time which is just right between hiding and being found and the game can be played satisfactorily. To be found too soon is tedious and humiliating, but never to be found can be agony. If the seeker gives up, gets bored, goes away and you still have not been found this is disastrous.

So the session arrived one day when I said, just as the symptom of not being able to listen began to occur in the session, "Although you are talking to me now I think that you do not expect me to listen to what you are sayin". There was a rather long pause. (I was not thrown by this as it was very characteristic of Faith's way in therapy – she always thought for a very long time before answering in her need to prepare herself). I decided to continue, saying, "In fact, I wonder sometimes if you do not expect me to even notice that you are here in this room with me".

There was another long pause and this time, although Faith was not talking yet, through silent communication she gained my full attention. She then said quietly,

When I was five, I was in a car crash. My father was driving and myself and my brother were in the car. It wasn't a serious crash but my cheek was cut and bleeding and I had to go to hospital to have it stitched. My mother was called and she came to the hospital and when she saw me she fainted. After I had the stitches put in we went home but I knew that my mother would not be able to bear seeing my face, so every time she came into the room I would go to the window and look out so that she didn't have to see me.

In my consulting room, both the couch and my chair behind it, face the window – at that moment both Faith and I were facing the window – and it suddenly became clear that the setting, during this phase of the therapy, was replicating this incident with her mother. However, the incident, (although it actually happened and was traumatic), was also a metaphorical condensation of Faith's pain. That is, that her mother could not bear to look into her daughter's face.

As a footnote here I would add briefly that the cut, clearly associated with *damage*, is also reminiscent of the female genitals, menstruation, and the contradictory symbols of castration and creativity.

This moment in the therapy marked a significant turning point for Faith and heralded a more authentic transformation than previously seen. Following on from this session the work focused on Faith's exploration of her feelings that I, like her mother, could not bear to see her scar/femininity/self. So that although she had over the years, revealed something of herself and her story, she was still afraid of making a demand from me in case it was too much and I could not bear it. Going along with this feeling was her fear of discovering something about herself that she did not like – she had the image of monsters locked up in cupboards – chaos would break loose if the cupboards were to open.



Working in the transference I questioned Faith's compliance in using the couch and for several months she explored her fantasies of what might happen if she were to sit in the chair. It became clear to me that Faith needed to be invited to use the chair and it was arranged at the end of one session that Faith would use the chair in the next time.

To begin with she was shy and embarrassed and giggled and for the first time I saw her smile and laugh and demonstrate something akin to happiness – I wondered about her mother's kiss on the cheek when she was 8 – healing the scar, acknowledging her femininity? Was the transference beginning to transform and could I now be the mother who would not faint facing the cut but rather see her femininity and in seeing, she could feel she existed?

After the initial novelty of using the chair, where I certainly began to witness a more alive patient, she occasionally went back to the couch, and each time I would experience something of the same inability to listen, (although never quite as marked) and she would feel she was hiding again and then come back to the chair. Here was some sort of enactment of Winnicott's paradox of being joy to hide but disaster not to be found.

Within a few weeks of Faith's use of the chair, our work focused on appetite, greed and an exploration of her aggression in all its forms. Faith was gradually able to show me many more faces and to talk about her desires and dreams and her life began to change in a dramatic and remarkable way.

For the first time in her life she was beginning to show all the signs of living a life from her true self; in contact with her own desires. And her feelings of true happiness were also becoming apparent in all sorts of ways. This ability to experience "*jouissance*" began to become a regular part of her life, and she came to understand her feelings of happiness as very much linked with feeling good about being female – at last she could be herself, even show herself – like all of us she was still isolated but no longer had to be insulated.

## Discussion

Faith's experience of a mother who could not empathetically attune herself to Faith's needs, probably from the beginning, meant that Faith internalized a non-surviving object – the result was a violation of Faith's sense of self. As a consequence Faith had been forced into insulating her true self in order to protect herself from more pain.

At the same time it was her true self connected to the life force within her – her destiny drive – which brought her to therapy. My countertransference of deafness was a concrete experience of the core of Faith's pain – a mother who could not empathize and the core-self object. This unconscious communication of the primitive internal object relationship brought the traumata of the past into the setting – in Winnicott's words from the epigraph – “the traumatic factors entered the psychoanalytic material in the patient's own way and within her omnipotence”.

My encouragement of her sitting up was linked with my sense that she needed to see the reality of my face in order to feel safe enough to explore and work through her primary aggressive, hungry feelings. If she had not sat up there was a risk that either the therapy would have continued at a false self, dissociated level or that she may have retreated further into the psychotic, *unthinkable anxiety* of her isolated core self and become even more incommunicado.

The experience of relating to another – who was perceived to survive – face to face – enabled Faith to experience, probably for the first time, a surviving object. Face to face she could destroy me (a de-construction of me as her mother in the past and me as her therapist in the present). Once this work had been achieved, face to face, Faith eventually did return to the couch where, still destroying me, she enjoyed the value of a free associative discourse and I could enjoy the value of free-floating attention.

I'd now like to give the last word to Dr. Winnicott. In 1949, Winnicott broadcasted to parents, on the radio, about the aspects of babies' *emotional* development. Many of these papers are published in *The Child, the Family and the Outside World*. I have chosen a short extract, taken from a *paper entitled*, "Why do Babies Cry?" (Winnicott 1964) – in this extract he is talking about the value of sad crying – and I think he is also telling his listeners about the crucial nature of the surviving object:

Perhaps I could give an illustration to explain to you what I mean about the value of sadness. I will take an eighteen-month-old child [...] whose mother decided to take a fortnight's holiday, telling the child all about it, and leaving her in the hands of people she knew well. The child spent most of the fortnight trying the handle of her mother's bedroom door, too anxious to play, and not really accepting the fact of her mother's absence. She was much too frightened to be sad. I suppose one would say that, for her, the world stood still for a fortnight. When at last the mother came back, the child waited a little while to make sure that what she saw was real, and then she flung her arms around her mother's neck and lost herself in sobbing and deep sadness, after which she returned to her normal state. (1964, pp. 64-65)

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 1960b: "Theory of the Parent-Infant Relationship", in Winnicott 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1963: "Communicating and not Communicating Leading to a Study of Certain Opposites", in Winnicott 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1964: *The Child, the Family, and Outside World*. Harmondsworth, Penguin Books.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1965: *Maturation Processes and the Facilitating environment*. London, Hogarth.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1968: "The Use of an Object and Relating Through Identifications". In Winnicott 1971a.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1971a: *Playing and Reality*. London, Tavistock.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1971b: "Mirror Role of Mother and Family in Child Development". In Winnicott 1971a.

## **APPENDIX 2**

**EDITOR'S FOREWORD 'A KIND OF FRENCH WINNICOTT'**

**in**

**André Green at the Squiggle Foundation**

## EDITOR'S FOREWORD

### "A kind of French Winnicott"

*Jan Abram*

*The first lecture:*

*absence and a piece of chocolate*

On 3 March 1987, André Green gave his first lecture to The Squiggle Foundation, entitled, "Experience and Thinking in Analytic Practice". Alexander Newman, the founder and first Director of *Squiggle*, introduced Dr Green and informed the audience that his collection of papers had just been published entitled *On Private Madness* (1986) and was available for sale in the bookshop. Newman followed this by saying that it was a book that he had read "from cover to cover, with little understanding and much interest". This evoked smiles and laughter from those in the audience used to Newman's dry sense of humour, and some quiz-zical looks from those of us who were newcomers.

André Green, quick on the uptake, said that he thought that probably Alexander Newman was really saying that he had read his book with great understanding and little interest. This was followed by a more general laughter, which probably included a sense of relief that the speaker had taken Newman's comment in

the spirit in which it had been said. André Green did not stop there; he then turned to the audience, saying, "I don't know what your reactions will be in terms of understanding and interest, after this lecture, because probably I have some difficulties in understanding myself with more or less interest." Now the audience could all relax and laugh together.

The warmth, spontaneity, and humour of this exchange captured all of us who were privileged to be in the audience that day. Subsequently we were treated to a lecture that was quite breathtaking for its texture and substance, equal to the delivery of a speaker who has the gift of conveying the ineffability of the analytic situation with humanity, passion, and a special sense of humour. My recollection is that the lecture was timeless, and it seemed that nobody moved for an hour and a half. Interest is too mild a word—the audience was fascinated. As for understanding—there were many themes that probably passed many of us by. And this, I think, is what Alexander Newman and André Green were alluding to in their playful exchange: the different analytic environments between the French and Anglo-Saxon worlds. André Green's exploration of psychoanalysis holds particular qualities that are unfamiliar to a British audience. I shall come back to this point.

When listening to a new speaker discussing a familiar topic—psychoanalysis—in an unfamiliar way—French psychoanalysis—what exactly do we take away with us and why? I am struck that I came away from that lecture with some particular impressions. I felt that Dr Green was both playful and serious. His warmth and humanity was conveyed through his sense of humour, and his passion through his respect for the patient's suffering. The other seemingly banal memory I was left with was that Dr Green lived and worked in an apartment in Paris, and that he liked a piece of chocolate after his lunch. In studying the text, I came to realize that my memory relates to the denouement of the clinical illustration in the paper, where Green introduces his concept of the *negative*. The piece of chocolate relates to something happening outside the session—during the *absence* of the object (i.e. Green eating a piece of chocolate before going into the session)—and yet *within* the analytic relationship. The patient feels tantalized by what her analyst

was doing in the two minutes between seeing him, not seeing him, and seeing him again (p. 12).

Green points out that there are two aspects of the *negative*. In one there is destruction and foreclosure—an attack on insight and the analytic setting—and the other, the *work of the negative* (which is instigated by the analytic relationship), contains the potential to bring the unthought known into consciousness, which will result in integration (p. 14).

What happened around the chocolate, between Green and his patient, facilitated a new shift in the patient, illustrating psychic change. "It is only if the patient can experience that feeling of movement in the session that I think he will be able to continue moving and working outside the session in the world" (p. 15).

Green does not talk about repetition, nor about enactment, but, rather, about *actualization*.<sup>1</sup> For Green, the analytic experience with every patient will involve actualizations of the patient's internal constructions within the analytic relationship—"What goes on between these two partners, analyst and analysand, is a historical process in that it deals with the way in which history is constituted in a person: how it works, how it becomes effective" (p. 2).

Green defines the historical thus: "... for the psyche, the historical could be defined as a combination of: what has happened, what has not happened, what could have happened, what has happened to someone else but not to me, what could not have happened, and finally—to summarize all these alternatives about what has happened—a statement that one would not have even dreamed of as a representation of what really happened" (pp. 2–3).

So what is the past? In Green's theory there is no such thing *per se*—rather, it is the subject's personal elaborations of the above variables. And the analytic situation lends itself to the *actualizations* of such constructions and such variables.

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<sup>1</sup>Professor Joseph Sandler, a long-term colleague and friend of André Green's, also uses the term "actualization" to explore his ideas on affect and role responsiveness. (Sandler, 1976a, 1976b).



*The second and fifth lectures*

"... you cannot speak of love unless you include an object." [p. 29]

The question of why a French psychoanalyst was visiting an organization dedicated to the study and dissemination of Winnicott's work, and why a *Squiggle* audience, whilst being very interested, may have difficulty in understanding Green's work, was addressed by Nina Farhi (the second Director of *Squiggle*, between 1989 and 1996), three years after the first lecture. By now *Squiggle* audiences were hooked, and on 2 June 1990, André Green presented to us his second lecture, entitled "Object(s) and Subject". Nina Farhi, in her introduction to the talk, commented on the difference between the traditions and qualities of the French and English cultural heritages, with the English traditions celebrating empiricism and pragmatism and the French, intellectualism and abstraction. Nina went on to say how André Green recognizes the deep abstraction to be found in Winnicott's work and that *Playing and Reality* (1971b) "is one of the most fundamental works in the field of psychoanalysis which embraces both traditions". It is striking how these words anticipated Green's paper of 1997 (the fifth in this collection), in which he explores and illustrates Winnicott's intuitive understanding of the themes pertaining to the *negative*. In fact Green begins this paper by saying that one of the sources that guided him to the introduction of his concept of the *negative* was Winnicott—in particular, the Winnicott of *Playing and Reality*. The paper is an illustration of how Green was inspired by these themes of absence, loss, and transitional phenomena. Incidentally, this is another rare glimpse of actual clinical data in Green's work—the first and the fifth lectures are the only two papers in this collection where you will find clinical vignettes. In this fifth paper Green tells us of a patient he treated who had been seen by Winnicott himself. She had been told that Dr Green was "a kind of French Winnicott".

After starting work with this patient under difficult geographical circumstances, Green realized that this was the patient to whom Winnicott refers in the final section of his seminal paper, "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena" (1971). Winnicott's clinical example is an illustration of the patient's inability

to keep the Other in mind. For this patient the analyst who was *not* there felt more real than the analyst who *was* there. This is wholly relevant to a passage in Winnicott's paper, "The Location of Cultural Experience" (Chapter 7 of *Playing and Reality*), where he vividly describes the process of internalization for the infant in relation to the crucial factor of the mother's timing:

The feeling of the mother's existence lasts  $x$  minutes. If the mother is away more than  $x$  minutes, then the imago fades, and along with this the baby's capacity to use the symbol of the union ceases. The baby is distressed, but this distress is soon mended because the mother returns in  $x + y$  minutes. In  $x + y$  minutes the baby has not become altered. But in  $x + y + z$  minutes the mother's return does not mend the baby's altered state. Trauma implies that the baby has experienced a break in life's continuity, so that primitive defenses now become organized to defend against a repetition of "unthinkable anxiety" or a return of the acute confusional state that belongs to disintegration of nascent ego structure. [1971b, p. 97]

Green explores and discusses how Winnicott intuitively the nature of absence and its impact on the infant's inability to internalize a reliable object. These are the themes that are intrinsically part of his concept of the *negative*.

### *The third and fourth lectures*

*"This is the crux of the matter: that one day this paradise has to come to an end, that two in one becomes two who are kept apart, and this is why a third is needed."* [p. 63]

Nina Farhi invited André Green twice more: in 1991, when he presented a lecture entitled "On Thirdness"; and again in 1996, for the Centenary Celebrations of Winnicott's work.

If you read the papers here in order of appearance, you will discern how the themes elaborate and develop into the subject of thirdness in the paper of this title. This is where André Green brings together the thought of Charles Sanders Peirce, a nineteenth-century semiotician (semiotics = the study of signs) with that of Freud and Winnicott and in doing so creates a new psycho-

analytic object—thirdness. The multidimensional quality and complexity of this paper conveys the very essence of thirdness—symbolization and the art of thinking.

I was also reminded of Winnicott's posthumously published paper, "The Use of an Object in the Context of Moses and Monotheism" (1969) in *Psycho-Analytic Explorations* (1989), where he writes:

It is easy to make the assumption that because the mother starts as a part object or as a conglomeration of part objects the father comes into ego-grasp in the same way. But I suggest that in a favourable case the father starts off whole (i.e.: as father, not as mother surrogate) and later becomes endowed with a significant part object, that he starts off as an integrate in the ego's organization and in the mental conceptualization of the baby. [p. 243]

Winnicott never denied the importance of the third for the baby's healthy development, but perhaps it is easy to forget this when, as he confessed, he did so much wish to speak to mothers. But reading this posthumously published paper, it is clear that Winnicott's thinking towards the end of his life is in line with Green's emphasis—namely, that the father in the mother's mind (the reality of the sexual union) is the whole father that will be felt by the baby at the beginning. And for Green it is this fact that constitutes the basis of mental health.

In 1996 André Green presented his paper, "The Posthumous Winnicott—On *Human Nature*", as part of *Squiggle's* Winnicott Centenary Celebrations. On that occasion we were treated again, and this time with Green's observations and reflections on Winnicott's profound contribution to psychoanalysis as outlined in his posthumously published book, *Human Nature* (1988). Green says of this book that it is "a transitional writing between the unsaid and the published" . . . "a book . . . that both is and is not the text" . . . "fragments of an unfinished symphony" (pp. 69, 70). He begins this paper by commenting on two conclusions that he came to after reading *Human Nature*. The first was "how Donald W. Winnicott's recapitulation was in continuation with Freud's work"—that he "did not break off with Freud but rather completed his work" (p. 70). The second was how much of an independent thinker

Winnicott was. "He was the true leader of the independent stream in the British Psycho-Analytical Society" (p. 70). Like the fifth paper in this collection, this fourth paper is a true celebration of Winnicott's thought.

Although André Green has published 14 books and over 200 articles, until recently the only book in English that was well known to the analytic community had been the collection (as mentioned above) *On Private Madness* (1986). Those of you familiar with that work will recognize many of the themes presented in these papers reiterated here. The central theme of exclusion from the primal scene and its influence on borderline defences in the "*dead mother complex*" will be seen in "Experience and Thinking in Analytic Practice"; the multi-layering of object-subject relationships and their impact on the oedipal constellation in "Object(s) and Subject"; and the quintessential Greenian elaboration of Freud and Winnicott—tertiary processes, symbolization, transitional phenomena, and the role of the third—in "On Thirdness".

### *Squiggle celebrating the work of André Green*

On 22 November 1998, the Foundation held a day's conference in celebration of André Green's work. Michael Parsons and Juliet Mitchell talked in the morning, and Gregorio Kohon introduced André Green in the afternoon, before Green himself extemporized on the papers of the morning. It was an excellent and memorable conference.<sup>2</sup>

The last year of the century brought more English translations of Green's work: *The Dead Mother—The Work of André Green*, edited by Gregorio Kohon (1999)—a collection of papers by eminent analysts in celebration of Green's work, one of which is the paper

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<sup>2</sup>The conference "Celebrating the Work of André Green" was held at the Brunei Gallery on 22 November 1998. Details of the day can be obtained from the *Squiggle* Foundation, 33 Amberley Road, London N13 4BH, Tel. 020 8882 9744.

presented by Michael Parsons, as mentioned above—and *The Fabric of Affect in the Psychoanalytic Discourse* (1999a). This latter book had originally been published in 1973! In addition, *The Work of the Negative*, originally published in 1993, has also now been published in English (1999b). Increasingly, then, the Anglo-Saxon world will have access to the thinking of André Green. That this monograph will contribute to the corpus of Dr Green's work is a great honour and very much in line with *Squiggle's* primary aim—to disseminate the work and tradition of D. W. Winnicott.

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